# Adventure

25c

October 1st

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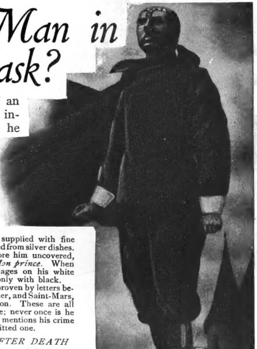
# *Who was the Man in the Iron Mask?*



THIS mysterious prisoner on the ramparts of an island prison has always excited the most intense interest. What was the life which he exchanged for one silent as the grave? What had he done? Who was he? What was his past? The dissolute life of a courtier? Or the devious ways of an intriguing diplomat? Had some fair one in the hallowed circle of royalty loved not wisely but too well? Why during all these years has he remained the greatest of all mysteries?

### *NONE DARED TELL SECRET*

Some believe that he was a twin or even elder brother of Louis XIV, a true heir to the crown hidden from the time of his birth. Others think that he was the eldest illegitimate son of Charles II; or that he, and not Louis XIII, was the actual father of Louis XIV. Some have thought that he was the son of Buckingham and the Queen of France; others, that he was the son of Louis XIV and De la Vallière. To have revealed it would have cost anyone his life. The regent admitted when drunk that the prisoner was a son of Anne of Austria and Mazarin. Louis XV refused to tell Madame de Pompadour. Madame Campan stated that Louis XVI did not know the secret. De Chamillart on his deathbed declined to reveal the secret.

### *MASKED—HIS FACE HIS SECRET*

In 1669 there was hurried across France a masked man whose identity was shrouded in mystery. Never has a prisoner been guarded with such vigilance and with such fear of his story becoming known. He was taken to an island prison where the governor carried his food to him; a confessor saw him once a year, but no other visitor ever laid eyes on him. *He was always masked—his face alone would tell his secret.*

He was well treated; supplied with fine clothing, books, and served from silver dishes. The governor stood before him uncovered, and addressed him as *Mon prince*. When the prisoner wrote messages on his white linen he was supplied only with black.

He is not a myth, as is proven by letters between Louvois, the minister, and Saint-Mars, the governor of the prison. These are all written in veiled language; never once is he given a name. No letter mentions his crime or whether he had committed one.

### *SECRET EVEN AFTER DEATH*

This horrible punishment ended when, in 1703, the most mysterious of all prisoners died and was buried in the dead of night, under a false name, and given a false age.

His cell was carefully painted so that any message he might have written would be covered up, and everything he used was destroyed lest any clew might be left. Thus vanished a man whose name and identity was unknown even to his gaoler—some think even to the prisoner himself.

### *WHY WAS HIS LIFE PRESERVED?*

What was the reason for all this secrecy? What crime, if any, did this man, evidently of exalted rank, commit that he should be buried alive for life? Why did the king preserve the life of this prisoner? Why did he not have him put to death? The subject becomes more mysterious as we investigate.

### *LONG BURIED RECORDS FOUND*

The mystery has always terrified the imagination and excited speculation. With the nineteenth century came an opportunity to search long-buried records. Dumas did so and told the whole story in one of the volumes of the strangest and most curious set of books ever published which he called

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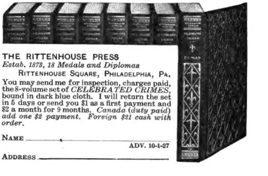

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Volume 64
Number 2

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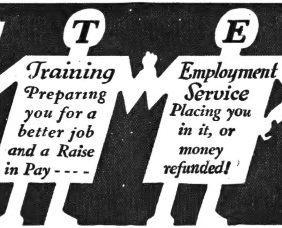
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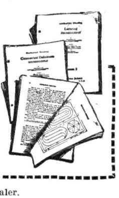

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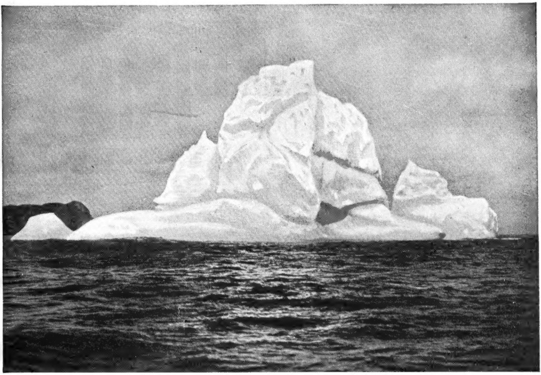

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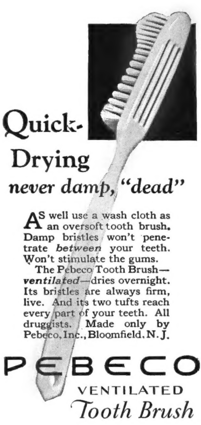

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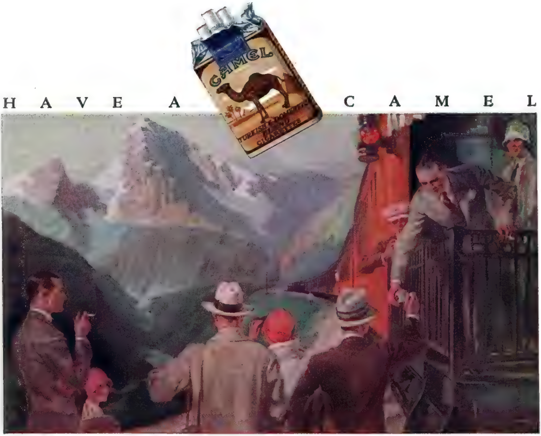

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MODERN smokers have in Camel such tobaccos and blending as were never offered in cigarettes before, regardless of price. Camels may be had everywhere—because they please the taste of smokers everywhere. Money cannot buy choicer tobaccos than you get in this famous cigarette, and the blend is so mellow and smooth that there is never a tired taste, no matter how many you may choose to light.

The producers of Camel, the country's largest tobacco organization, concentrate all their purchasing and manufacturing resources in this one brand of cigarettes. Into it goes their undivided pride and skill to produce such a smoke as the world has never known before.

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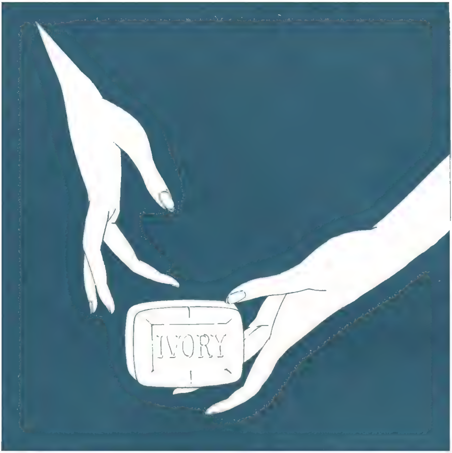

# *You'll pay up as cheerfully as Anne*

Anne was buying toilet soap. Twenty kinds to choose from, all the way to seventy-five cents a cake, each with its rosy promises and foreign accent.

"Here, Anne," said Phyllis, "try a dozen of my private brand. If you don't like it, I'll take the rest of the dozen. If you *do* like it, you'll owe me sixty cents!"

We happen to know that Anne paid the sixty cents—with enthusiasm entirely unbecoming a debtor. She thinks Guest Ivory is perfectly adorable!

This dainty, exquisitely feminine luxury that is winning such a remarkable welcome from women all over America, is genuine Ivory Soap. Smartly-turned-out in charming blue, moulded to fit slim, feminine fingers, Guest Ivory is quite as attractive as any soap, no matter how costly. Yet Guest Ivory costs only five cents a cake. A dollar couldn't buy a finer soap for your face and hands.

PROCTER & GAMBLE

*For the face and hands*
*As fine as soap can be*

Guest
IVORY

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*99 44/100 % Pure*
*It Floats*

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*Joseph Cox*
EDITOR

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## *Near mutiny in the Philippines*

# THE DARK REGIMENT

ACROSS the mesa, a line of white targets bobbed up and down. Dust spurted in small fountains about them. Great disks, black, red and occasionally white, rose solemnly up from the earth and lightly touched the faces of the serene squares of white. Now and again derisive little red flags would wave ironically, mockingly across the great bull's-eyes.

Back on the firing line, where a long row of dust-colored, serious-eyed men lay prone, Major Davies sighed as the red flag was waved for the fourth time over Number Ten target.

"You see, Swanson," he said gently to the somber-eyed soldier who had just fired, "you missed again because you flinched. Let's try it once more; this time hold your breath and squeeze the trigger as gently as you can. Here, let me load for you," and he reached for the rifle, inserted the shell and handed back the gun, ready to fire.

The man slipped his arm through the leather sling, settled the butt of the gun firmly to his shoulder, lined up his front and rear sights and carefully drew his breath, holding it as he squeezed the trigger. Suddenly he gave a convulsive jerk; the trigger snapped—but there was no explosion. Swanson stared at the gun, looking bewildered. Some one laughed near-by.

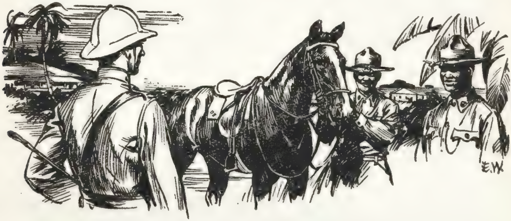
"You see how you jumped, then? I played a little trick on you by putting in an empty shell. Now try it again. Here, I'll load your rifle."

The soldier took the gun, this time a skeptical look on his face. He wasn't going to be caught by that trick a second time. He carefully aimed and squeezed the trigger. Much to his surprize the firing pin exploded a loaded shell. He stared stupidly as the target on his front dropped down into the earth and a fresh one came up. He waited while the men in the pits found and pasted the bullet-hole and put up a great disk, marking a point a little below and to the right of the bull's-eye. A pleased grin on his face, he turned to Davies.

"Whad d'you know about that?" he marveled. "A four!" An exultant gleam came into his eyes.

"Now a slight turn to the elevation

### By MALCOLM WHEELER-NICHOLSON



screw and a half-point on the windage will bring you into the bull's-eye this time," encouraged Davies.

The sights were adjusted. The man sighed happily and snuggled down with the stock of his rifle against his cheek. This time he did not flinch. A great white disk rode up from the pit and covered the face of the black bull's-eye. His eyes fairly shone as he watched it.

Davies rose, brushing the white alkali dust from his knees and wiping the perspiration from his face.

"Get the major a chair," Sergeant Henderson ordered one of the men. "Better take it easy awhile, sir," he cautioned the old man. "You've been a-layin' in that sun all morning, teachin' these dumbbells how to get on a target, and this Texas sun ain't no joke."

Davies sat back gratefully and rolled a cigaret. Captain Montgomery, the lean-faced adjutant, nodded in approval.

"Seems to me," he added judiciously, "that if I were a field-officer and were supposed to sit around and look wise, I'd take it easier."

Davies looked up at him reflectively.

"Maybe you would, and maybe you wouldn't. Next to picking up a pat straight flush, I don't know any greater thrill than taking a perspiring and persevering soldier, who can't hit a flock of barns, and exhorting him into making a string of fives. It's the getting of such definite results that puts the kick into it."

"Well, they certainly are perspiring and persevering enough. These birds don't do a thing but eat, sleep and talk shooting all through target season." Montgomery glanced over to where a near-by group of soldiers were heatedly comparing scores.

"Sure," agreed Davies, nodding, "the average *soldat americain* likes shooting. Target season offers him the only opportunity, throughout a boresome year, to aim at something definite. The rest of the year he has nothing to aim at, and he generally succeeds in hitting it."

"Soldiers aren't very much interested in their daily work," admitted Montgomery. "Blamed if I see why they're so keen on shooting."

"Well, they get better pay if they shoot well, for one thing. But the biggest thing is that they are competing with other men. And beating out the other fellow always tickles an American pink. It's his heritage of sporting instinct. And because of that heritage the American Army is the finest shooting army in the world, bar none."

"Is that so, Major?"

"Yes, if the rest of our military work only came up to our shooting we'd have *some* army! And it would be so blame easy," Davies said, half to himself, staring thoughtfully over to where the men waited their turns at firing.

Montgomery took the bolt out of his rifle and wiped it carefully. Sergeant Henderson came up and said something to him.

"Swanson rolled up a score of forty-two at this range, Major," he informed Davies. "Says it's the highest score he ever made."

Davies nodded, unimpressed.

"Certainly he had it in him," he stated calmly, "and he's got a lot more stuff in him. Swanson is an average American soldier. And the American soldier is like an eight-cylinder car. Under our slightly antediluvian army methods we only manage to get him working on two cylinders. If we'd use the same sense in our other work that we show in our rifle practice, he'd be hitting up on all eight and running smoothly and powerfully."

Montgomery was adjusting his field glasses and examining the range before him.

"How are you going to tune him up?" he asked casually.

Davies stared across the mesa. The young captain glanced sidewise at his tall lean frame, at his serious mouth and chin and at the kindliness of the eyes above them. But there was something in the look of those eyes now that reminded him of Beelzebub, the golden sorrel mare that Davies had changed from a regimental hoodoo into a regimental mascot. Both the mare and the man were built on rangy, powerful, thoroughbred lines and both the man and the mare had that same trick of staring off into infinite distance, as if visualizing far horizons.

"How are you going to tune up the army?"

Davies came back to earth again.

"I'll tell you about the time I served under Colonel 'Timmy' Phelan. Maybe you can gather how not to tune up an army, at least. Ever hear of Timmy Phelan?"

"Have I?" Montgomery threw up his hands. "I didn't know you'd ever served under him. I've heard some weird stories."

"You haven't heard the half of it," grunted the major. "Listen—"

And he sat up in his canvas chair and began to talk, stopping at intervals to watch the men on the firing line, telling his tale to the accompaniment of the steady crackle of rifle-fire as the targets rose, curtsied and disappeared, very much in the manner of a line of old ladies rehearsing a minuet.

And this is the tale as he told it.

IN THOSE days Davies was a lieutenant. His tour of foreign service falling due, he was ordered to join the Nth Cavalry on the Mexican Border, that regiment being under orders to go to the Philippines. The Nth was a colored regiment.

Being a lieutenant, and not being a very high ranking lieutenant, the regimental commander assigned him to what was then known as the machine-gun platoon. It was an orphan outfit, wedged in somewhere in the regiment and sniffed at generally by most of the older cavalry officers.

Being an orphan outfit it was made up of men detailed from the regularly organized troops in the regiment. As the commanders of these other troops were allowed to recommend whom they pleased for this detail, naturally they saw a heaven-sent opportunity to get rid of their worst "goldbricks"—the army term for a soldier who divides his time between going absent without leave and repining in the guardhouse.

As a consequence, when Davies examined his morning report, he read it with a steadily deepening frown.

"Is this right, Sergeant?" he turned to the coal-black non-commissioned officer, "we've got twenty-four men in this platoon and eighteen of them are either A. W. O. L. or in confinement?"

"Yes, sah, Lieutenant." The acting first sergeant rolled his eyes solemnly. "Dis here outfit's done been pretty bad utilized."

"Pretty bad what?" Davies had still to learn not to look puzzled when the colored trooper sounded off with a highfalutin word, the peculiarity of the negro trooper's use of words being that one can generally get his meaning in spite of how he says it.

"Dey done been pretty bad utilized, sah, Lieutenant; ain't nobody paid much attention to dis here platoon and de men gets kind o' fractious." The old sergeant wrinkled his brow painfully in an endeavor to make himself clear.

"I see," nodded Davies with a perfectly straight face. "They've been demoralized by the inscrutable indifference of a higher command, which has unaccountably denied them their due need of cooperation."

"Yes, sah, Lieutenant, yes sah!" the sergeant replied heartily, a great awe in his eyes, "dat's just what Ah was tryin' to tell the lieutenant." And Davies could see his lips moving silently, in the attempt to memorize the luscious, great, long words.

Suddenly it came over Davies that he was home again, among a race that he knew and liked, and he thought back to his boyhood days and the great trees before his grandfather's house in Tennessee, and the kindly cheerful black folk among whom he had spent his boyhood days.

"Listen here—" he turned on the negro suddenly, so that the worthy sergeant blinked and stepped back a pace—"you get word around to those worthless black boys who are absent that they'd better get back here quicker than scat if they know what's good for them."

Unknown to himself Davies' speech had slipped back into a softer, more liquid note, a note that the colored man recognized instantly.

"Now, Sergeant, I'm going to try to hornswoggle the commanding officer into lettin' me have these other worthless, no-account, triflin' niggers out of the guardhouse, and we're going to have a real outfit lined up here tomorrow!"

"Yes, sah, Lieutenant!"

The sergeant was emphatic. He saluted and bustled out, immensely important, his face shining with satisfaction.

"He's real white folks," was the word that went out concerning Davies.

The sergeant worked to good purpose. The lieutenant retrieved his men from confinement. Next morning saw some twenty-two earnest black faces staring rigidly to the front, as Davies inspected them.

The young officer was none too happy over the prospect. He had been examining the descriptive lists of each of the men before him. Scarcely a one but had several summary courts martial or a special court or two. Some of them even had records of general courts chalked against them. They were veritably the worst men in the regiment, all thankfully detailed to the machine-gun platoon by troop commanders anxious to get rid of them at any cost. Evidently courts martial had no terrors for them; something else would have to be invoked. Could he stir up their pride? He wondered. It was worth a chance.

"You men belong to the machine-gun platoon." Davies gave them "at ease" and talked seriously. "Do you realize the weight of responsibility that hangs on each man of a machine-gun platoon? No? I'll tell you. If you handle your machine-guns carefully, each man of you is worth twenty ordinary men armed with rifles! Get that and think it over."

The negroes looked impressed.

"Every time one of you goes to the guardhouse or goes absent without leave, twenty men go to pot!"

Black foreheads wrinkled in thought; white eyeballs rolled solemnly.

"Now we are engaged in serious business. Some day our country is going to need us. When Uncle Sam calls on us, are we going to fall down on him?"

Black heads shook in violent negation.

"I've been looking over your records." Men looked sidewise at one another. "Some of them are not so good. But all that's over with. As far as I'm concerned you all start with a clean sheet."

A look of vast relief spread over the faces of the assembled negroes.

"Trouble is with you, you never knew before what an honor it is to handle machine-guns. Nowadays machine-guns are so important that only the best men are picked for them. They are the *corps d'élite* of the Army!"

It was very plain to be seen that none knew the meaning of the term but they were all vastly impressed.

"Remember that word now; you are the *corps d'élite* of the regiment and of the Army, and if any man of you forgets and misbehaves, the rest of us will throw him right out and send him back with the ordinary cavalry soldiers where he belongs."

They all nodded violently. Then and there each soldier decided emphatically that he would not be the luckless man who made the first break.

Davies dismissed them. They all went chattering to their barracks. From the hubbub of excited comment he knew that they had taken his words to heart.

"If they'll only believe half of that, it may perk them up," he mused. "Maybe something can be done with this outfit after all. Now I'd better go and see what a machine-gun looks like!"

SERGEANT TURNBULL, waiting until the officer was out of sight, had gathered his black cohorts around him in the machine-gun barracks.

"Ah wants you young soldiahs to listen to what ah says. You all done seen our new officah. Now lemme tell you somepen. Ah's served undeh moah officahs than what you has ever seen. Some is good officahs and some is bettah. Dis here lootenant is one o' the better. He's been bawn and raised with cullud folks. He aims to get along with cullud folks, but he ain't gonna stand for no foolishness howsomever. He says to me no longer than yesterday—" the sergeant swelled out his chest grandly— "he says, 'Sergeant,' he says to me, 'dis here outfit ain't goin' to no longer be inscrutabilized in a no accountable fashion by a cooper—cooperashun o' de higher command.' "

The sergeant paused dramatically to allow these words to sink in. White eyeballs rolled; black faces look awed; the sergeant went on:

"And foh you-all, men what ain't had the advantages of eddication, ah'll state that de lootenant means by them words that if any loose-livin', splay-footed, slack-jawed, shifty-eyed nigger in dis here outfit tries any foolishness, de lootenant will cloud up and rain on dat said individual until dat said individual aforesaid will wish hisself travelin' from elsewhere to whence. Yas, sah, and when dat lootenant of ourn clouds up, somebody am a-goin' to git powerful wet."

The dusky troopers were visibly impressed.

THE DAY finally arrived when the regiment entrained for San Francisco. The machine-gun platoon, having been neglected, had no troop fund and Davies himself had to pay off their debts before they left. The regiment left camp, marching on foot, led by the band. Davies liked the spick-and-span trimness of these colored soldiers, their khaki uniforms clean and pressed at all times, their hats carefully blocked, their leather leggins shined to the last word.

What he liked most of all was their marching. It was his first view of negro troops marching to music, and he marveled at that indescribably cadenced crackle and snap that distinguishes the marching of the negro soldier from that of all other troops.

It set him to wondering what sort of fighting men the colored men were. He knew that the American negroes, as a whole, were not descended from the warrior tribes of Africa, that their ancestors came from the Slave Coast, the Gold Coast and from what is now Liberia, and that they were unwarlike tribes sold into slavery by old King Maccoco. Among them he saw finer, more distinguished looking specimens, men with the eagle glance, the proud bearing and the reddish skins of the Bambarra, that warrior tribe of Africa. These men were generally non-commissioned officers.

The regimental sergeant major, a tall, dignified gray-haired negro, had all the poise and bearing of a king and the distinguished courtesy of a trained ambassador. He might easily have been the leader of a Zulu *impi*. Most certainly the finer types of American negroes could be found in the army. Their records as soldiers had been good when they were well led.

Of course, there was that affair at Carrizal, but their white officers had been killed first; as a rule, they would follow a good officer anywhere. There was that unpleasant affair in the early days in the Philippines when one of the negro organizations had risen *en masse* and killed its white officers.

This incident puzzled Davies. It seemed hard to believe, somehow. The natural instincts of these people were kindly. The young officer finally came to the conclusion that the white officers killed by their own colored men must have been at fault, must have driven their men to such action by brutally untactful handling.

And there were officers in the army, as every one knew, who should never be allowed to have command of men. Such officers seemed unable to rouse anything but vindictiveness in their subordinates. He had often heard of one officer, a certain Colonel Phelan, known throughout the army as "Timmy" Phelan, whose disposition was such that his entire regiment had walked out from under him, down on the Border. It was common gossip in the army; but the thing was hushed up officially and, of course, never got in the papers.

With these thoughts in mind Davies took advantage of the long train trip to San Francisco to study his men carefully and to work out a system that would assist in getting the best results with them.

They arrived at San Francisco at last. The Nth Cavalry joyously took possession of the transport. Pay-day, just before embarking, had left them all in funds. Naturally, crap games, large and small, went on everywhere. The commanding officer of troops, the senior officer on board, an infantry colonel, sought zealously to break these up and he complained bitterly to Major Wentworth, who was temporarily in command of the regiment.

Guards were increased, until nearly half the Nth Cavalry was engaged in guarding the other half. Finally, when the colonel made a flying inspection and found the guards shooting craps with the guarded, he gave in and let Nature take its course. Thereafter for a few days below decks resounded happily with objurgations to "Little Jo" and "Eighter from Decatur." Then, the bothersome loose money having drifted by easy stages into the hands of the more skilled, the fever of excitement died down.

It was then that the regimental chapplain organized the minstrel shows. These were unique. With due regard to the amenities governing minstrel shows, the black performers never failed to apply large quantities of burnt cork to their faces. The after deck was rigged up with a stage. On this, as the transport plowed its way through the tropic seas, the Nth Cavalry minstrels frolicked gaily, their quips and jokes sending vast roars of Homeric laughter out to startle the lone seagulls, following the ship through the wastes.

At night the tinkle of many banjos and guitars and the rich voices of the men blended into harmony such as only the negro can produce. The ship moved across the great spaces of the Pacific with music and song pouring out under the tropic moon.

Davies occupied his spare time in studying the machine-guns and learning their every part. After two weeks of this he was convinced that the Bênet-Mercier was an excellent gun, providing one had a troop of Swiss watchmakers to operate it.

Honolulu provided the first break in the long voyage. Major Wentworth called the officers together and informed them that there would be a day's shore-leave for the men.

"Talk to your men before they go ashore. You know, as always happens, some white soldier on police guard, calls a group of our men black or nigger, and the war is on. See if we can't avoid it this time."

But in spite of warnings, there was a miniature riot. The officers were called out in the small hours of the morning to patrol Honolulu and return all men to the ship. This was the first time that Davies realized the potentialities of the colored man for swift anger. He came up to a group of them on a side street. They were organizing a rescue for three of their comrades, picked up by the white provost guards. The negroes seemed to be in a daze, their eyes staring; they acted in unison, silently, but very much as men who were under the influence of drugs. Davies straightened them out and got them back on the ship. But the experience made him study his men anew.

Major Wentworth was a quiet-voiced, unobtrusive commanding officer, who saw everything, said little, but corrected anything wrong very swiftly and certainly. He was immensely relieved when the anchor was raised again. To the tune of "Hawaii Nei," played by the band on the dock, and with every one wearing the ceremonial *lei* wreaths, the transport set sail.

Not until ten more days had passed did they sight Guam, that far-flung outpost of the United States—a tiny speck in the Pacific—which served as a coaling station for the Navy.

A FEW days more saw them entering Manila Bay. The Nth marvelled exceedingly at the great, gray vastness of Corregeidor, that American Gibraltar of the far East, rising sheer from the floor of the harbor. Passing it, they studied the innocent-looking cliffs that towered up above them, knowing full well that the huge fortress of living rock was honeycombed with passages and chambers, that great guns crouched in hidden emplacements below its crests and that the silent mass could, almost at the touch of a button, erupt into flaming, roaring anger, heaving a destructive hail of riven steel on an enemy fleet.

Manila unfolded before them with its great sea wall, its medieval Spanish quarter, its modern buildings, its crowds of gaily garbed natives, its streets filled with *carrometas* and *calesas* pulled by somnolent ponies, its lumbering two-wheeled carts drawn by sullen looking *carabao*, its air redolent with the heavy scent of *ylang-ylang* blossoms, a teeming, thriving metropolis of which America may well be proud.

The men were hugely delighted as they piled aboard the cars which were to carry them to Camp Stotsenburg in Pampanga Province. The little narrow-gage trains, hauled by vociferating green-and-gold locomotives, sped through tangled stretches of jungle, through great meadows of tangled *kogan* grass, hurrying through native *barrios* full of naked brown children, discouraged looking chickens, prowling, bluish-colored dogs and fierce, razorbacked pigs.

The stations were crowded with sweltering humanity—white-clad, loose-shirted, barefoot men, each with his fighting cock under his arm; and voluminously skirted, soft-eyed women, gracefully balancing great baskets on their heads, carrying smooth-skinned, yellow mangoes or green *papayas* or red-and-yellow and purple bananas or bottles of dark rice beer or finely chopped ice, splotched with scarlet fruit juice.

Camp Stotsenburg was a sprawling army post with the usual long line of barracks, on one side of the large parade ground, facing the officers' club and houses on the other. The houses were low wooden frame buildings with *nipa* thatched roofs.

The men settled into quarters, and quickly made themselves comfortable. The horses of the former regiment were turned over to them and the routine of garrison life commenced.

The heat was intense, so intense that in the Philippines officers were forbidden to drill men in the afternoon. Therefore the morning was taken up with the drill and stables, and the afternoon saw a vast silence descend upon the great cantonment, as every one took the siesta so necessary in the heat of the tropics.

As the heat of the day lessened toward sunset, the post gradually came to life. Officers were out with their tennis and polo, while the men busied themselves with baseball practise. Later in the day the officers changed into the white-and-gold of the tropical evening dress. The band played from the parade ground; there was the sudden blare of trumpets, and the regiment lined up. A great silence fell over the place as the silvery notes of retreat rang out; the strains of the "Star Spangled Banner" floated out over the jungles, and the flag came slowly down from its staff.

From the officers' club the cheerful notes of dance music filled the moonlit nights; from the men's quarters came the sound of song and happy laughter, the tinkle of banjos and guitars and the shuffle of many feet keeping time to the dancing harmony.

Davies came in, the first day, after getting his platoon settled. So intense was the moist heat that, taking off his khaki uniform, he dropped it on the floor, where it slumped like a wet bathing suit.

At the bachelors' mess they found a heritage of white-clad, barefoot, native boys, who waited on the officers, looked after their laundry, pressed their clothes and served at table. They were from all parts of the Philippines—Visayans, Tagalogs, Illocanoes, Matabeles and others of the diverse tribes that inhabit the Islands. So dissimilar were the languages of all these natives that they had, perforce, to converse with one another in English.

THE MACHINE-GUN platoon was assigned a small barracks away down behind the other line of men's quarters. Most troops have a troop fund, belonging to the men and built up from contributions and various assessments. From this fund baseball and football supplies, magazines, phonographs, pool tables and other things are purchased for the soldiers. The poor old machine-gun platoon had nothing of this; their barracks was bare and naked. Davies, resenting this, bought from his own pocket a pool table and a phonograph, two essentials to any soldier barracks. This cheered up the outfit considerably.

Davies wasted no time in getting the men started on the machine-guns. He had four of them. Around the Bênet-Merciers he built up four squads of men. Now the orthodox method of getting men trained in the army is to keep them at drill—a daily repetition of the same movements until some degree of performance is reached. But Davies wanted to do more than that. He wanted his men to breathe, live and eat machine-guns to the exclusion of almost every other interest. To do that men have to be interested.

The machine-gun platoon, unlike the other organizations in the regiment, had no guidon, the scarlet-and-white silken flag carried at the head of each troop.

"Sergeant Turnbull, this outfit has to have a guidon," he announced to the dusky first sergeant.

"Yas, sah, yas, sah, Lieutenant, dis 'ere platoon would be powerful pleased with a guidon," the old man nodded his head enthusiastically. From the sergeant's joy, Davies figured that the possession of a guidon would have a good effect on the morale of the outfit. But he had even deeper plans in mind.

The purchase of some scarlet and white silk and the sewing of a Chino tailor insured the guidon, proudly sporting the neat letters M. G. T. A brass-tipped staff was salvaged from somewhere.

The platoon was lined up ready for drill one morning. Davies carried the guidon out and showed it to the highly delighted men. They wanted to take it out to drill immediately. But Davies shook his head.

"This won't be used today," he informed them. "One week from today I'm going to have a competitive drill between the four squads. The one that comes out best will be allowed to carry the guidon for one week thereafter."

The men nodded seriously, each squad eyeing the members of the other squads, studying them and their possibilities. They were undoubtedly interested in the proposition. It was a sporting thing; it gave them something definite for which to work. The guidon automatically became a symbol of excellence, much as that little bit of white-starred blue ribbon and metal, called the Medal of Honor, is a symbol of bravery.

"But that isn't all," went on Davies. "The squad that wins won't have any kitchen police or stable police to do for a whole week."

Grins of delight appeared on the faces of the men as this news sank in. This was something like! No washing dishes or peeling potatoes or cleaning picket lines or wrestling with bales of hay and sacks of grain for a whole week.

"Of course, somebody will have to do that extra work," continued their officer "and we'll let the squad that makes the poorest record for the week carry the burden. Now anybody that does any foolishness like going absent without leave or raising Cain in any other way will have his sins checked up against his squad. When he gets back and finds that he's put his friends in wrong and made them do most of the dirty work for the platoon for a week, he's not going to be very happy."

It was several minutes before the diabolical potentialities of the new plan dawned on the men. When it did they were startled into reflective silence. But when their minds finally grasped it they grew jubilant. It certainly was going to make things hum around that platoon.

Davies himself was surprized at the swift change in his organization. Things tightened up immediately and automatically. His men were throwing themselves breathlessly into their work. In one week they were handling the machine-guns with assured familiarity. In two weeks they had mastered all the drills and firing commands. In the third week they were beginning to fire the guns accurately.

Davies had to make some readjustments before the new system went smoothly. Some squads had a surplus of slower men. These had to be distributed fairly. In one case a non-commissioned officer slowed up his squad. He was reduced, and a keen private appointed in his stead.

The work had developed into a game, with all the keen competition of a game. Money began to change hands on the outcome of the weekly scores. Davies had to correct and iron out attempts at cheating. But his work had grown enormously more interesting. From being the slave driver of an uninterested group of plodding soldiers going dispiritedly through a daily grind, he had suddenly become an umpire, judging between four high-spirited, intensely interested teams of sportsmen.

An order came through from the War Department, making the cavalry machine-gun platoons into full troops and raising their strength to forty-eight men. But in detailing the new men the order specified that they were to come from the regular troops. All the scalawags and goldbricks that the troop commanders had overlooked before were now thankfully detailed to the machine-gun troop.

Davies, after collecting his new men from the guardhouse and from absent without leave, looked them over without much enthusiasm. They were not anything to grow happy over.

But they were swiftly caught up in the new spirit of the new organization. In a week or two they had become so enthusiastic that many of them were crowding the old men for honors.

A little thrill of pride went through Davies as he at last led his new organization out, mounted, its guidon flaunting proudly at its head. It looked like a real troop at last. There was only one fly in the ointment. The new tables of organization prescribed six machine-guns and the troop had only four. His troop being too poor to be able to afford a typewriter, Davies had loaned them his own battered machine.

It happened that this machine was equipped with a faded purple ribbon. The requisition for the two extra guns and pack equipment was laboriously made out on this old wreck of a machine and duly forwarded. Davies waited one week hopefully; then two weeks impatiently, but there was no response. Finally he hired an automobile and rode to Manila. Here he found a friend at the Ordnance Depot and wheedled the guns out of him, carrying them back with him in the car.

One month later the requisition came back. It had grown exceedingly in bulk, with some forty added endorsements. The last endorsement was a portentous and heavy warning to the commanding officer of the machine-gun troop to refrain in future from using a purple typewriter ribbon in making out official documents. There was nothing said about the machine-guns. Higher authority had completely forgotten the Bênet-Merciers in its horror at the heretical purple-inked requisition.

But as the two guns in question were at that very moment being carried out to drill, Davies devoted a minimum of time to remorse over the purple ribbon. He had now six guns and six keen squads of men to run them. The machine-gun troop barracks hummed like a beehive.

There was no need to discipline the men. The men took care of that themselves.

Out on the drill and parade grounds the rest of the regiment went through its daily routine as it had always done. The soldiers of the Nth, being men of long service, were not in need of more drill than was needed to keep men and horses fit and in shape to take the field and to keep the regiment up to standard.

Life was very pleasant at Stotsenburg. Regimental baseball got under way; the officers began to develop some excellent polo. The golf and tennis enthusiasts organized tournaments. A great minstrel show, embracing all of the exceptional talent of the Nth Cavalry, was rehearsing nightly.

ONE DAY a sudden rumor began to coil and eddy around the regiment. Men were looking worried. Officers shook their heads. Down at the bachelors' mess there was gloom and some trepidation.

For word had come that Colonel Timmy Phelan had been ordered to take command of the Nth Cavalry. He was arriving on the incoming transport, due almost any time now.

Timson, who on the Border had been in the famous regiment that had suddenly walked out from under the colonel, looked especially downcast.

"What's his specialty?" he was asked.

"His specialty! Being meaner than a lone wolf with a sore foot. You'll learn things about the regulations that you never knew existed when that old boy hits here."

This was depressing.

At last the word came that he had arrived. All officers were ordered to headquarters to meet the new colonel. Davies saw a lean man of middle height and middle age, gray-haired and red-faced, with exceedingly sharp, keen, blue eyes, in which there rested something like a gleam of sardonic humor. The colonel was exceedingly energetic, pacing back and forth nervously before the officers as he addressed them.

"Officers and soldiers are the laziest people in God's green earth," he opened his speech, "and no one pays any attention to regulations. I am in command here and I'm going to see that every one works and that every one follows the regulations. That's all, gentlemen—good day."

A group of silent and rather stunned officers filed out. Davies grinned to himself. There was something noteworthy about this terse, hard-boiled old bird, at that. He certainly didn't waste any words.

That afternoon Davies remembered some reports that he had to get in and instead of taking his siesta, went down to the troop orderly room. Glancing into the cool interior of the barracks he saw his men in shirt-sleeves, working at the guns. There seemed to be some sort of a race going on and there were many shouts of encouragement.

Old Sergeant Turnbull, his first sergeant, now proudly sporting the diamond chevrons of his grade, saw him enter the orderly room. Soon Davies heard a "sh-sh" go through the squad rooms. The shouting stopped instantly, but he could still hear tense breathing through the thin reed walls and hear the snip and click of machine-gun parts being assembled.

There was a step outside on the porch. The door opened without a knock. Davies, looking up, saw the sardonic blue eyes of Colonel Timmy Phelan regarding him.

Davies rose swiftly.

"How are you, Colonel?" He placed a chair for the newcomer.

"What's this outfit?" barked his guest.

"Machine-gun troop, sir."

"Hrumph!" Evidently Colonel Timmy Phelan thought little of machine-guns. "Seems to be the only troop in the regiment doing anything this afternoon," he grunted peevishly. "Every one asleep at the switch, as I expected." He glared out of the window up towards the deserted parade ground. "They won't get away with that very long," he growled.

"Well, Colonel, it's pretty hot—" Davies started to speak.

"Hot! Hot!" The old man's eyes flashed angrily. "What is this—a bunch of Sunday-school teachers or a regiment? I'll show them what *hot* really means before long!"

It was on the tip of Davies' tongue to tell the colonel that orders of the Philippine Department forbade afternoon work in the tropical sun; but he reflected that it wasn't exactly tactful for a lieutenant to instruct a colonel on department general orders, and he kept silent.

The colonel rose.

"You've got the neatest looking barracks and stables I've seen in the regiment," he growled, as if it hurt him to give any one a compliment, and went on his way.

That night at the bachelor officers' mess there was an innovation. Finding that most of the native boys played some sort of an instrument, the mess officer organized five of them into an orchestra. As the twelve or fourteen bachelors dined in state, the orchestra played away, thrumming out the gay lilt of "Seraphina" and the haunting notes of "La Paloma" and "Las Golandrinas." Davies looked around the large table, with its great candles casting a soft light on the white and gold of the uniforms, and considered that this was much better than the hot and dusty Border with its alkali and mesquite and its gritty sand.

THE NEXT day things went on much as usual. But when the trumpet sounded "officers' call," at one o'clock, each officer found a sheaf of papers in his box. Dusty and wet with sweat after the morning's drill, the bachelors swarmed to their mess and took off their grimy khaki, had their shower-baths and gathered around the table for lunch, all of them clad in the white sleeping kimonos, ready to take their siestas after the meal. Sing, the Chino cook, brought in great platters of ice-cold mangoes with which they assuaged their thirsts before tackling the lunch.

It was not until then that they started to read the new orders received at headquarters.

"Good lord!" exploded Timmons, the tall fair-haired lieutenant of G troop. "What in the name of all that's holy is this!" He read on, frowning.

"Why," growled another, "the colonel is starting the whole regiment in at recruit drill, commencing with paragraph one and taking to paragraph fifteen for this week. What is the matter with him? These men in the Nth have been in the service for years. They don't need recruit drill!"

"One week learning how to mount and dismount from a horse, how to hold the reins, how to salute—what the blazes does he mean?"

"Listen to this," read Timmons:

> "At seven-fifteen A.M. all troops in the regiment will hold instruction in paragraphs one to four. At eight A.M. all troops will hold instruction in paragraphs five to ten inclusive. At eight forty-five A.M.—"

"But did you see this?" some one else shouted. "At two P. M. all troops will hold instruction in the school of the trooper mounted, on the parade ground—starting with today. And it lasts until four o'clock! Why! That's against orders!"

"Drilling the whole afternoon in the hot sun?"

They looked out of the broad doors of the bachelor building on to the parade ground, where waves of heat were shimmering across its silent expanse. A lone lizard made the furnace-like heat seem even more desolate by repeating his monotonous cry—*gecko! gecko! gecko!* But orders were orders. They bolted their meals hurriedly, and silently got back into khaki again. There was no time to lose.

That afternoon saw the parade ground filled with dispirited groups of officers and men listlessly going through the motions of the "school of the trooper," the instruction designed for recruits. A burnished sun poured down its searing rays from a copper sky. Every troop was doing the same thing at the same time, all rigidly following the schedule as laid down in the orders. The colonel walked around watching with eagle eye.

Davies could find nothing in the orders referring to the machine-gun troop. This surprized him somewhat. But because every one else was out working, he went to his own troop and called them out. Leading them down to a shady spot close to the edge of the trees he started a competition between the squads in quick dismounting and going into action. It was so like a game that all the men were hugely interested and the hours passed quickly. As a matter of fact, working them against a stop-watch, he cut down by three minutes the time it took the troop to commence firing, a very important matter when three minutes might mean the loss of many lives.

After this workout, stables followed naturally, the second time within the same day, and the horses and mules had to be groomed again, no easy task in the heat.

A group of thoroughly tired officers assembled again that evening at the mess. The music from the native orchestra started up.

"Oh, cut out that infernal racket!" Timmson shouted irritably, and the native boys filed out, without a sound.

The meal was eaten in silence. Most of the officers already showed lines of strain under their eyes.

Davies, taking a stroll after dinner, missed the cheerful music and laughter from the barracks. All was a quiet and brooding there.

"A singing nigger is a happy nigger," he quoted to himself, "and a silent nigger is none too safe."

He studied the long line of soldiers' barracks with thei hundreds of dusky troopers—over a thousand men—and contrasted it with the homes of the forty or fifty white officers and their families. Negro troops had mutinied before in the Philippines and shot their officers. And this lonely Camp Stotsenburg, set here in the wilds of Pampanga, was a long way from civilization.

DULL and wearisome days succeeded each other. By taking all initiative from the officers and minutely prescribing every movement they would make throughout the day's drills, the colonel succeeded in removing all interest from their work. Naturally they had little spirit to pass on to the men. The men began to assume that pathetic, worried look which appears on the face of the colored man when he's "under a powerful strain."

Davies managed to keep his own men cheerful under the gruelling sun, principally by staying out of it. Also he had them fired to a keen pitch of enthusiasm for the machine-guns and their service. Interested men learn quickly and perform well. There had not been a single one of his men in the guardhouse or absent without leave for as long as ten minutes since he assumed command.

One afternoon he was putting them through a tent pitching competition. The colonel rode by and stopped to watch. He saw forty men drop from their saddles as though shot, saw them hit the ground and rapidly link up their horses and mules. The saddles were off in a few seconds and lined up against the guidon. Suddenly a line of shelter tents appeared and men were arranging mess kits and blankets ready for inspection. As each squad was finished its leader reported. The colonel gazed on them, amazed.

"That's the livest troop in the regiment," he growled. "The rest of them are all dead from their feet up." He rode away.

But it suddenly came over Davies why the colonel let the machine-gun troop alone. The old man didn't know anything about machine guns and didn't want to show his ignorance.

Saturday afternoon was free. It was then that the baseball practise took place. Davies went down to watch his troop team. Among the guardhouse birds to which he had fallen heir he detected symptoms of a real pitcher or two and a first class catcher. The men of his troop were playing in undershirts and breeches and running shoes.

"When do we play the first game of the regimental series?" he asked Sergeant Turnbull.

"Next Saturday, sah, Lieutenant." Turnbull turned a worried eye on the rough practise.

"All right, tell the team I'm going to bet a whole sockful of cash on them. If they lose, I lose. If they win, I buy them a complete set of baseball uniforms and equipment."

Sergeant Turnbull carried the word to the players. There was a long colloquy.

"We sure cain't let the lieutenant lose his money," they agreed.

Impressed by this, several of the older non-commissioned officers, who had been good baseball men in their day, bestirred themselves and came out to coach. Thereafter, at the close of "stables" each day the entire troop turned out. The next Saturday they won the first game of the series. Davies took one of the non-coms to Manila and together they bought a bang-up baseball outfit.

The following games found the machine-gun troop attired in proud uniforms, flaming in purple and yellow, so that the members of all other troop teams in the regiment sighed mightily and enviously. And the machine-gun troop won consistently and steadily—every game they played.

The grueling heat of the afternoon drills began to tell first on the white officers. Three dropped out of the bachelors' mess and went to the hospital. The doctors began to shake their heads when the negroes started to go under. The major-doctor in charge of the hospital told Davies one day that over one-eighth of the enlisted strength of the regiment was on sick report. It is not safe for a man to be physically depleted in the tropics. There are too many dangerous diseases lurking in wait, ready to fasten themselves on his weakened body.

Certainly the bachelors' mess was no cheerful place those days. Dispirited and weary officers growled dismally at one another when they spoke at all. Few had energy left for polo or tennis, and dancing was out altogether. Even the women of the regiment began to show the strain of living with querulous and fault-finding husbands.

A gloom had settled on the bright spirits of the Nth Cavalry. Among the regular troops of the regiment, quarrels and knifings between the men became more frequent. The trouble with negro fights is that they generally end in casualties of a serious nature. One duel with knives in B troop ended fatally. There was a quick court martial of the survivor. He was sentenced to death.

"We'll have that fellow's sentence read before the entire regiment," growled the colonel. "Maybe it will teach these niggers to think twice before drawing a knife."

Now it happens that there are certain sympathetic folk who can use the word "nigger" and get a smile from the colored man. And there are many who had better eschew the use of the term in referring to that somewhat sensitive race. The colonel belonged to the latter category. The word spread like wildfire through the regiment. And into the eyes of the soldiers came an inscrutable look, the inscrutable look of the black man when he thinks his own thoughts and shares them with no one but his own race.

As ordered, the regiment was lined up, the three squadrons forming three sides of a hollow square. Into the square, heavily manacled, a wild-eyed negro soldier was led. The adjutant, in a loud and piercing voice, read the man's crime. The regiment listened stolidly, a thousand black faces gazing straight to the front.

"And therefore," the voice of the adjutant rose, "he is condemned to be hanged by the neck until dead!"

By accident or design, the voice of the adjutant rose to a shout on the last words. Through the straight ranks of the thousand black men before him went a quiver and a strange sound, a low moan that rose, gathering volume until it filled the air like the humming of thousands of angry bees. It was an indescribably primitive sound, a sound that made the listener's hair rise on the back of his neck. The moaning hum died down; the men stood straight and quiet again, gazing stolidly to the front.

Again Davies thought of these good-hearted but exceedingly temperamental black men, subject as they were to sudden fits of mob passion; and he thought of how simple a thing it would be for them to rise and overpower their white officers. Strangely enough, he was not worried about the damage to the white officers, including himself, so much as at the sure and swift punishment which would overtake the negro. He did not want to see this fine regiment blotted out, when it was so easy a matter to control these people and gain their loyal cooperation.

DAVIES' turn as "officer of the day" came around at regular intervals. Part of the duties of that office is to take over the responsibility for the guard, the guardhouse and the inmates of this last sojourning place. Every time he went on duty he checked up the prisoners; every time he went on guard he found the list steadily mounting.

The average colored soldier, unlike many of his white brothers-in-arms, does not take the guardhouse as a joke. The roll call ordinarily showed some ten or twelve men under arrest in the whole regiment. But now the total mounted steadily from day to day.

In the third month of Colonel Timmy Phelan's command there were over a hundred men in confinement—an entire troop of cavalry at war strength, nearly one-twelfth of the combatant strength of the regiment. Davies shook his head over this, but could not resist a little thrill of pride at the knowledge that there was not a single one of his own men there.

The medical officers were frankly worried. They were responsible for the health of the command, and their personal efficiency records were being hurt in their own corps by an exceedingly high sickness rate. Nearly one-fourth of the regiment, officers and men, were now on sick report.

Davies began to dislike dining at the bachelor officers' mess. So lined and weary-looking were the faces of the young officers, so irritable were their occasional remarks, that it always seemed as if they were on the verge of an explosion.

From the colonel's headquarters poured a steady stream of orders. New recruits came. Instead of including their training in the regular drill hours, the colonel decided that they must be handled out of hours, so as not to interfere with the regular training of the regiment.

After a few more days of this extra strain Captain Poinsett keeled over on the drill ground and was sent to the hospital to begin a long series of travels in search of lost health, travels which were to culminate six months later in his retirement from the army for physical disability. Young Lieutenant Alexander began to act queerly one day. Suddenly rushing to his quarters, he came back with his pistol. His face wore a cunning look.

"There's a man in this regiment trying to kill me," he whispered, "and I'm going to get him."

He strode away over the parade ground, his pistol cocked and ready. He was subdued, luckily, before he did any harm. On the surgeon's recommendation he was sent away and a few months later was retired as physically and mentally disabled.

Poor Hurd, as fine a physical specimen as one could find among the officers of the whole army, tried doggedly to carry out every order given to him, with the result that he went the way of the rest and, when last heard of, was a regular inmate of military hospitals in which he underwent an operation twice or thrice a year for intestinal trouble brought on by overwork in the tropics.

The colonel spent most of his time these days "ragging" the recruits, much in the manner that a yearling rags a plebe at West Point. He followed them about, keeping up a steady fire of comment and criticism at their awkwardness. Davies, passing by unseen one day, heard one of the bewildered darkies ask another—

"Who dat white man wid de chickens on his shoulders?"

"Why, boy," was the answer, "dat dere is the colonel o' dish here regiment."

"Zat so?" The first one shook his head mournfully; then with a sigh, "Well, he sure is powerful cruel!" and the two returned resignedly to their tasks.

The one bright spot in the week was the negro church on Sunday. Davies used to attend regularly, in the first place, because he liked to hear the oratory of the negro chaplain, an earnest and eloquent exhorter for the Lord, with a gift for colorful imagery; and in the second place because the negro spirituals were beautifully sung by the rich musical voices of the Nth cavalry troopers. He noticed a vague change in the spirit of these songs.

Where formerly their voices had risen exultantly in such triumphant chants as "All God's Chillen Got Shoes" and "Lordy, I'm Glad I Got My Religion in Time!", they now seemed to be partial to more plaintive lays, and crooned out, "Oh, Lordy, Won't You Hear Me Prayin'?" and "Oh, Mary, Don't You Weep, Don't You Moan", with all the tuneful pathos of which their race is capable.

IN DAVIES' troop things went along smoothly enough. The colonel still neglected to lay his blighting hand on the activities of this organization. Davies was enjoying his work hugely and, naturally enough, communicating his keen pleasure to his men. His system of competitive try-outs was slowly but surely showing up the strong and weak members of his non-commissioned personnel. Very quietly he moved for the reduction of a few hopelessly inept ones and for the promotion of capable juniors. The men all realized the justice of his moves, for the record of each corporal and sergeant was there for all men to see in the records of the performance of his squad.

He learned one lesson, however, when it came to old Sergeant Scotter. Here was one sergeant that had all the earmarks of a splendid non-commissioned officer. Sergeant Scotter had the reddish-tinged skin and the sharper features of the warrior Bambara. He had the ability to handle men, but would not or could not make his squad win.

Sergeant Scotter was undoubtedly falling down on the job. His men were not up to scratch. He was losing steadily in the competitions. Before breaking the old man, Davies called Sergeant Turnbull into conference.

"Yas, sah, Lieutenant—" Sergeant Turnbull's dusky face grew grave—"dat dere Sam Scotter is havin' domestic try-try-biliations; yes, sah, he shore is afflis-cated wid infelicity and unharmony in his matrimonial relations."

"In other words, his wife is giving him hell?"

"Yas, sah, yas, sah, his wife done fill his life wid mournful cogitations; dat dere woman am sure a powerful disturbance to tranquility."

Calling in Sergeant Scotter, Davies asked him frankly about his troubles. The old man would give nothing but evasive answers, and the interview revealed nothing.

But that evening, as Davies was resting on his bed under his mosquito bar, trying to read in spite of the heat, his boy announced a soldier to see him. Putting on kimono and grass slippers, Davies went out to his sitting room. Sergeant Scotter was ushered in, turning his hat awkwardly in his hands.

"Yas, sah, Lieutenant, the Lieutenant knows maybe Ah's been havin' difficulties wid my wife. It's all on account o' that there woman that Ah's powerful low in my mind, sah, Lieutenant," and there was something pathetic and wistful in the old fellow's eyes.

"Is she much younger than you, Sergeant?" asked the white man gently.

"Yas, sah, Lieutenant, she's mighty young and mighty flossy, all de time trapesin' around wid dese here young buck niggers and showin' no respect for mah rank and position in de regiment. Ah done married dat girl when I was home on furlough. She wan't nothin' but a cotton-pickin' nigger—yas, sah, Lieutenant, she didn't have nothin'. Why, sah, a dollar in dat girl's pocket would a rattled like a mule in a tin barn, yas, sah, Lieutenant!"

The old man wagged his head sadly. Davies looked the other way suddenly. The old man went on—

"Sah, Lieutenant, Ah done raised dat girl from a lowly estate and it appears lak its done gone to her haid." He shook his head again and then relapsed into a silence.

Now for a "cotton-pickin' nigger" to marry a sergeant was a big lift in the colored social scale, for a colored sergeant in the Army ranks even higher than a Pullman porter, while, as every one knows, a Pullman porter is perched on a serene social height.

It appeared on investigation that the lady in question was waiting at the back door. She was called in, a little proud at this solemn conclave assembled in her honor. Davies talked to her, gently telling her how she was hurting her husband's chances, and he ended up with a promise to aid the husband in getting a divorce and having her returned to her cotton-picking if she didn't mend her ways.

Strangely enough, this rough form of tribal justice worked like a charm. Thereafter Sergeant Scotter took heart of grace and fell into his work with enthusiasm. But the word went forth—and this family conference was the forerunner of many thereafter, men from other troops coming with their troubles, until Davies knew all the strange undercurrents of colored family life in the regiment and unraveled many entanglements which these black folk brought to him.

The same rough sort of justice worked well enough in the troop. The black man is given to strange fits of gusty and causeless passion, passion aroused seemingly over a mere trifle.

It was a lamentable fact that most of these storms were decided in the machine-gun troop with the aid of the sharp machete issued to machine-gunners. Learning this early in the game, Davies had the keen edges of these weapons ground down, so that, at the worst, they could do no more than leave a lively bruise.

One of these sudden flare-ups occurred on the picket-line one sultry afternoon. The two culprits were brought before him, ranged on either side by a portentous first sergeant and a solemn stable sergeant.

"What started the riot?" Davies asked.

"Sah, Lieutenant, dis here fellow done called me a lazy black nigger."

Davies looked him over quizzically.

"Well, aren't you lazy?" he drawled.

The soldier's strained and angry face relaxed.

"If de Lieutenant says Ah is, Ah reckons Ah is," he agreed mildly enough.

"Well, aren't you black?"

"Yas, sah, Ah reckons Ah's kinda dark at that," he grinned.

"Well, aren't you a nigger?"

"Yas, sah, if de Lieutenant says Ah is, Ah reckons Ah is."

By this time both the soldiers were grinning broadly, their rancor forgotten.

"Well, get out of here and don't bother me. If you do any more fighting I'll have you skinned alive and boiled in oil."

Both men left hugely delighted. Davies worked on the principle, right or wrong, that it never does any good to take the colored man's frequent minor falls from grace with too much seriousness.

THE FINALS of the regimental baseball league were played off. The machine-gun troop won the regimental silver cup and the great banner. Davies was pleased as Punch, knowing full well that a decided victory in anything is one of the most important steps in making a mob of men into an organization.

Shortly thereafter a regimental inspection in full pack was ordered by the colonel. The order came to pitch tents. Almost before the rest of the regiment had started, the machine-gun troop had finished, standing by its completed camp, ready and waiting for the inspection which followed. The colonel stared at this.

Turning to the adjutant, in plain hearing of the troop he announced authoritively—

"This machine-gun troop is the best organization in the regiment."

A quiver of pride went through the waiting troop; white eyeballs rolled ecstatically.

"It's too bad," the colonel went on, as he dismounted to inspect, "that a machine-gun troop is of no tactical value."

"How do you mean, Colonel?" Davies looked up astonished.

"It's no good for cavalry. Why, I could take a squadron of cavalry and charge you off your feet before you could get your guns into action."

"I'd like to take you up on that, Colonel," Davies said respectfully.

The colonel bored into him with his harsh blue eyes, but said nothing.

"I'd like your permission to arrange a firing test that will prove how quickly we can get into action and what we can do after we get in," Davies went on steadily.

"All right," the colonel waved his hand carelessly, "make your plans and we'll see," and he walked through, inspecting the men's equipment.

Davies watched the men narrowly as the colonel stopped by each pup-tent and examined the two soldiers stiffly at attention before it. Again he noticed that brooding, mysterious look that comes into the colored man's eyes when he is confronted by the white man who is out of sympathy with him.

And Davies knew that there was an entire regiment of colored men who possessed a mass dislike for this colonel, a mass dislike that could easily be fanned into a sudden overpowering flame of hatred, that might do great damage before it was put out. For the regiment was steadily deteriorating. The score of sick had grown until now there was almost a third of the strength of the Nth Cavalry on sick report. This would not have aroused the hatred of the negroes. It was the colonel's reasons for this state of affairs that set them stubbornly against him.

"These lazy black boys would rather go to the hospital than work," commented Timmy Phelan, unfortunately within hearing of one of the black men aforesaid.

And of course it was all over the regiment in half an hour. And a strange anger, all the more dangerous for being repressed, seethed in the breasts of the black soldiers.

"WHAT in blazes makes those men of yours sing all the time?" Timmons asked irritably at dinner that evening. "They are going around like a dizzy bunch of canaries. I heard them singing at stables this morning. Who ever heard of a nigger singing at stables?"

His question was posed insultingly and his voice was harsh. Davies started to resent the tone, then remembered the strain under which every one was laboring and replied mildly:

"Oh, it's just a fad of mine. I like to hear darkies sing. Lord knows, if they can get any joy out of life these days, they're welcome to it."

Other heads nodded at the table.

"I haven't heard a song from my outfit in so long that I think they've forgotten how; they go round mumbling to themselves. I don't like that much," confessed Stanwick, who had a troop down in the first squadron.

"But what are you doing over there in your machine-gun troop anyway? My man, Curtin, who's one of the best pitchers in the regiment, is trying to transfer to your outfit?"

"Search me," shrugged Davies, "I didn't seduce him."

"Well, it doesn't make much difference anyway. My men haven't got enough heart left to play baseball any more. All they do is go around mumbling to themselves and shaking their heads. They're absolutely depressing."

"If the old man keeps me out on that parade ground many more of these hot afternoons I'll do worse than mumble," growled Hastings, who commanded a platoon in troop M of the third squadron, "I'll go around picking things out of the air and singing—'tweet-tweet—I'm cuckoo.' "

"Speaking of being cuckoo, have any of you seen 'Bunny' Featherstone lately?" Bunny Featherstone was the regimental-ordnance - quartermaster - police - everything - else officer.

"No, what's his trouble?"

"He's got a queer look in his eyes. Came up to me at drill today. Said he was thinking of nothing but bumping himself off. Dreamed of it every night and thought of it all day. Said he was afraid of himself."

"The hell you say! He's got an awfully sweet little wife and a brace of kids. That would be a shame."

"I tried to soothe him down but he went away with his hands crossed behind him and his fingers curling and uncurling like a plateful of snakes. They'd better watch that baby or he'll up and shoot himself."

There was a long silence broken finally by Hasting's voice—

"Here's to the dead already—
Hurrah for the next who dies!"

He quoted the song most brutally.

"Good old army where they have crazy colonels running around commanding thousands of men. Did you ever notice the back of the old boy's head? There isn't any. He wears cap size about five and half. Never saw a man without any back to his head that was normal."

"But why in the name of sin doesn't some one tell them about him down at department headquarters?" asked young Webly, newly arrived and a very short time in the service.

There was a long and pregnant silence. Finally some one spoke up.

"Yeah? Nice business. Junior officers complaining of a senior. Department headquarters would reward you by throwing you out on your left ear and turning you over to the colonel for 'disciplinary action'. No thanks, I'll stick to the troubles I know 'rather than fly to those I wot not of'—which Shakespeare or somebody got off a few thousand years ago."

"Well," Hastings grumbled reflectively, "if I have to put those men of mine through recruit drill many weeks longer, they're just naturally going to blow up, and there will be an explosion that will shake up department headquarters."

"Do you really think the men would mut—would raise Cain?" Young Webly avoided the dread word, but his eyes were round and serious.

There was a silence for a space. No one looked at him. Finally Hastings rose and yawned and went out singing softly to himself:

"Ain't been long in this here army,
Mighty short time since I arrived;
Guess I like it better than a-farming—
Ain't no cows for to milk or drive."

DAVIES went to his quarters to work out a very interesting problem. If a squadron of cavalry at a gallop can cover so many yards in so many seconds, in how many seconds is it necessary for a machine-gun troop to unlimber and commence firing in time to stop the charge? As he worked it out he figured that a machine-gun outfit that could come into action in twenty seconds from the time the cavalry was started could break up a cavalry charge.

The next morning he timed his men with a stop-watch. They dropped from the horses, unlimbered their guns and commenced firing in twenty-five seconds. He shook his head. They'd have to do better than that. He told them why.

The next day they cut the time down to eighteen seconds. That was better. They seemed to have no difficulty in keeping around this figure, which was a safe enough margin.

He stopped in to see the colonel.

"With your permission, sir, I'll have disappearing targets placed on the B range in three successive lines, the targets to appear at intervals representing the approach of a squadron of cavalry at charging speed. I think I can prove to you that I'll stop them with my guns."

The colonel laughed skeptically.

"All right, I'll be there with all the officers of the regiment to show them how wrong it is to place dependence in those toys of yours. Tomorrow afternoon, on the range at four, and I'll have the targets put up myself so that you won't know from which direction the attack is coming." The colonel's harsh blue eyes glared suspiciously.

"Fair enough," agreed Davies.

Luckily his men were skilled at firing the guns. He had insisted in firing them on the range at least once a week, both with single shots and with bursts of fire. They had become very proud of their ability to hit with these complicated little air-cooled Bênet-Merciers.

THAT afternoon there was the sound of pistol shots coming from down on the officer's line. Davies, crossing the parade ground, saw people running toward Bunny Featherstone's house. He followed. A crowd of officers and soldiers suddenly ran back towards him.

"Look out, he's shooting."

He heard a shot and saw a leaf flicked off from the tree overhead.

"Bunny is barricaded in his house; we don't know whether he's killed his wife and children yet. But he's gone staring crazy!" Hastings panted beside him.

"Maybe I can talk to him," Davies said easily.

"You'll get riddled full of holes," Hastings called after.

But Davies walked very calmly down the deserted sidewalk and up the steps of Bunny's house. All was silent. He tried the door. It gave to his hand. Entering, he saw Bunny waving a pistol around in his hand, leaning dizzily against the dining-room door.

"What the hell is the matter with you, Bunny?" he called, his voice very matter of fact.

The man with the pistol turned around and peered at him craftily.

"Put that gun down, Bunny," commanded Davies firmly; he walked up with outstretched hand at the same time.

Bunny continued to stare at him without a word. Then, very wearily, he handed the gun over.

"My head feels funny," he whimpered and, slumping down, began to cry like a child.

Davies left him there and made a quick survey of the house to see whether he had shot wife and children. He found Mrs. Featherstone in the kitchen with her children, crying hysterically. Bunny had threatened them but had gone out first to drive away the invaders.

"Oh, that horrible colonel," moaned

Mrs. Featherstone, a pretty little blond woman whose normally rosy cheeks were pale and streaming with tears, "it is all his fault. Now Bunny has gone crazy. What shall I do? What shall I do?"

And he had gone crazy. From that day on he recognized no one and spoke no word of sense. He was sent back to the States under guard on the next transport, to spend the rest of his short life in St. Elizabeth, the Army insane asylum at Washington.

THE NEXT afternoon Davies led his troop out on the B range, north of the post. The B range is the target range for unknown distances, as opposed to the A range, where distances are known. The adjutant met him at the edge of the range.

"The colonel directs that you march along this road until you sight the enemy cavalry, and thereafter take such action as seems fitting. A pistol-shot will warn you of the start of the cavalry charge against your troop."

Telling his men to keep eyes and ears open, Davies gave the signal—

"Forward—march!"

Behind him the silken guidon snapped in the breeze. The first squad with its two mules, one carrying the machine-gun and the other the extra ammunition, was at his heels, followed at regular intervals by the other five squads.

Up on a slight hill to the right he could see a group of officers with field glasses, among them the colonel. Somewhere along this stretch of road the machine-guns would be jumped by a hypothetical squadron of cavalry, represented by lines of cardboard silhouettes of men and horses. He hoped his men would keep their wits about them.

The plain rolled up away from him to the left of the road. There was naught discernible in the *kogan* grass. Suddenly he heard a shot.

It was to the left. Without looking he signaled "fight on foot," and leaped from his horse.

There on the plain, at a few hundred yards' distance, had suddenly appeared a long line of targets.

His men were boiling on the road. Before he had time to give a signal he heard a burst of shots from the nearest gun. It was followed by the staccato rattle of the other five guns.

Fountains of dust were raised before and behind the line of targets. Suddenly that set of silhouettes dropped into the *kogan* grass. One hundred and fifty yards nearer, appeared another long line. The time was so regulated as to simulate the rapid approach of a squadron of cavalry at the gallop. Without command, the fire of the guns was trained on the new objective. Clouds of dust rose about the pasteboard figures.

Suddenly one end of the line of targets began to droop and the entire row fell over. So intense was the fire that the targets had been shot through and through and the guy ropes cut by the hail of bullets.

But another row, this time close at hand, rose up suddenly. A terrific fire was directed on these. They began to drop and they fell in the same manner. A whistle blew "cease firing." Davies signaled.

The colonel rode up, a stop-watch in his hand. He was engaged in low-voiced conversation with Major Ladrew. The two gazed curiously at Davies and his waiting troop. The colonel seemed displeased. Without a word he rode over to examine the targets. Major Ladrew lagged behind. He leaned down swiftly from the saddle.

"Son," his eyes twinkled, "you've broken a world's record. You went into action in twelve and two-fifth seconds. I have been watching your work with that gang of jail-birds you had wished on you in the machine-gun troop. Congratulations!"

And he rode on leaving Davies in a fine glow.

"Fine work," he called to the anxious-eyed men, "you have done wonders. You went into action in twelve and two-fifths seconds," his voice rang exultantly.

"Why, damn your worthless hides, you've broken a world's record!"

It was cruel to keep men at attention in the face of such news.

"Rest!" Davies called to them.

An excited babble of voices and happy laughter broke out. But it was hushed as the colonel and Major Ladrew came riding back. The colonel looked, if anything, more displeased than ever.

"Well," he grunted, unamiably, "you seem to have hit a few targets," and he rode back to the waiting group of officers on the hillside.

Major Ladrew gazed after him, a curious look in his eyes. Then he turned to Davies.

"You cleaned up, son," he said. "The targets are all torn to pieces. Your fire was accurate and your distribution almost perfect. Had that been a real squadron of cavalry they would have been massacred. More power to your elbow, young fellow," and Ladrew leaned down and grasped Davies' hand in a hearty grip, then rejoined the colonel.

THE COLONEL thereafter made no reference to the feat. He preserved a deep silence on the whole affair. As is usual in the regular army, no official mention whatsoever was made of the breaking of this record, although the facts found their way into the papers and into the military journals of other armies. Weeks later Major Ladrew came to Davies with a cablegram in his hand.

It was signed by a very famous ex-president, now dead. It asked Major Ladrew for recommendations for three army officers to act as majors in a regiment which the then ex-president contemplated raising for service in Mexico.

"I have cabled your name," said Major Ladrew quietly, "as one of the three livest junior officers I have ever met. Anybody who can take a gang made up of guardhouse cast-offs from other troops and break a world's record in three months is a real leader."

The word of the machine-gun troop's prowess spread all over the regiment. Incredulous troopers went out on foot to look over the torn and mangled targets. A lively and wholesome respect for machine-gun fire entered into the souls of those men. And as for the men in the machine-gun troop—they had long since assumed an air of galling superiority, but now they became totally oblivious of the very existence of the rest of the regiment.

Applications for transfer to this outfit began to pour in on regimental headquarters from men in the other troops of the regiment. The greatest threat that could be made to a member of the machine-gun troop was a warning that he would be transferred back to the line.

The orphan outfit, despised and rejected, had really become the *corps d'élite* of the regiment. Shortly after an order came through from the War Department, increasing the strength of the machine-gun troop of a regiment of cavalry from forty-eight to seventy-eight men. In other words, it had been brought up to the peace strength of a regular troop of cavalry.

Davies sighed when he saw the order. It meant the beginning of the end. It was no longer a lieutenant's command. He would soon lose command and a captain would be appointed to reap where he had sown.

Some daring soul must have made a complaint of the extremely demoralized state of the regiment, for an inspector dropped in one day from Manila. This inspector-general was a dry, bespectacled wisp of a man, who was immediately impressed by Colonel Timmy Phelan's evident anxiety to follow every single one of the regulations issued by a War Department unusually given to voluminous legislating. The inspecting officer sedulously avoided questioning any officers or men.

He left after twenty-four hours and evidently turned in a very favorable report on Colonel Phelan. Thereafter it was observed that one of the majors in the regiment began to wear a harassed and hunted look. It was not long before he was ordered to Manila to appear before a court martial on some charges that had nothing, absolutely nothing, to do with his having told the truth about the incapacity of a colonel who was commanding a regiment of cavalry at Camp Stotsenburg.

The men began to show signs of the strain that they were under; their eyes were sunk far back in their heads, giving them a look of absolute dejection. There were no more dances in the men's quarters. The nights at Stotsenburg were still and silent, with no sound of happy laughter rising, nor any note of music.

Another incident occurred to deepen the growing sullenness of the men. Out on the great drill ground the regiment worked by troops and squadrons. The colonel, coming out one day, upbraided several officers for the lack of life in their drilling. Riding along at the side of one troop he scolded and growled until the troop commander was nearly desperate.

"Now get your men in line and let me see you charge down that strip through the woods, and for God's sake get some life into it!"

"But, Colonel, the natives have the ground down there dug up with grasshopper pits—" the officer started to expostulate.

Grasshopper pits are trenches dug across trails and open spaces, long and narrow pits, not over eight inches wide and several feet deep, made for the purpose of trapping the great swarms of locusts which the natives use for food. These pits are concealed in the tall grass and constitute an ever-present danger for horse and rider.

"What do you mean by disputing my order?" shouted the colonel. "Move out immediately—grasshopper pits! What next?" he snorted angrily.

The officer obeyed, grimly riding at the head of that swiftly galloping troop, straight into the treacherous ground. Four horses went down; two had to be shot immediately. One rider had his arm broken; one was bruised badly. Two of the black soldiers lay still and silent, their necks broken. The colonel looked them over calmly.

"You can't make omelets without breaking eggs," he commented. "There are plenty of these—" he pointed contemptuously at the two silent figures—"there are plenty of *these* left."

As the colonel rode away a low growl rose up from the troop, a growl almost animal-like in its throbbing intensity. The white-faced officer mounted wearily to his saddle and followed the ambulance in, his troop riding silent, ominously silent, behind him.

Orders came for the regiment to take the field on maneuvers. A little life instilled itself into the dejected officers and men. It was a relief anyway from the unvarying daily grind of following page and paragraph of drill regulations.

They went north to Capas, where the colonel started what he called maneuvers. The officers soon found that these movements were afflicted with the same species of dry rot that deadened the daily drills. Every movement was done by rote and line. There was no initiative left to officers and men. Troops were ordered to march to certain points.

Once there, their orders were laid down strictly, covering every step. At the end of each day the colonel held what he called a *critique*. He always managed to find the hottest and most steaming spot in the landscape in which to hold these.

His favorite gathering place was a small clearing in the dank *kogan* grass, the height of which effectually kept out any wandering breath of air, so that officers were steaming moist and bathed in sweat through a weary hour of harangue and scolding.

FINALLY some staff officers came up from Manila and set the colonel a problem to do, to illustrate how he could handle the regiment on campaign. Throughout one hot afternoon officers and men were sent hither and yon, up hill and down, mounted and dismounted. There was some dim idea that they were engaged in holding a river-crossing in the rear of a retreating army, but no one knew what it was all about.

At the end of the exercises the umpires held a *critique*. One of them, an extremely austere, gray-haired colonel, waited until the last.

"Colonel," he began easily, "the method you used today was exactly the same means used by Colonel Distchenko, commanding a regiment of Dragoons in the Russo-Japanese war. I might say that you duplicated his every move with remarkable fidelity."

Colonel Timmy Phelan looked around the group of officers with something like pride in his eyes. He nodded, trying to look modest, and motioned for the umpire to go on.

The gray-haired critic cleared his voice.

"I will have to add, however, that the worthy Colonel Distchenko lost his entire regiment, to a man, and was himself killed."

The colonel glared in astonishment. Then, as the full import of the words struck him, his face burned a deep angry red. But the umpire went on pitilessly, telling him how his whole conception of the problem was faulty from the beginning. By the time he was finished, there was not an officer in the regiment who had not seen that the colonel was as mad as a turkey-cock.

And, naturally enough, he took it out on the poor old Nth. The regimental maneuver finished the campaign. "Boots and saddles" rang out from the trumpeters. The colonel fell in at the head of the regiment, mounted on a powerful long-legged gray horse. Without looking behind him, he ordered the forward march.

Davies, riding in the rear of the regiment with his troop, suddenly lost touch with the squadron in front of him. He gazed ahead, worried. The regiment had disappeared from view. He was going along at a smooth and even gait, the regulation trot for cavalry and the fastest pace at which cavalry can cover many miles and still come in unscathed and fit for the next day's march, or for battle.

He made what time he could by shortening his rest periods and by increasing his trotting time over his walking time. But he had some twenty kilometers still to cover and he had to bring his animals in free from saddle galls.

As it was, he dismounted before his troop stables late that night. The others of the regiment were already finished with their grooming. After seeing to his men and animals, he repaired to the bachelors' mess for something to eat. All the officers were there, a scowling, indignant bunch.

"What happened?" Davies inquired.

"What happened?" growled Haskins. "Why, the crazy old fool trotted about ten miles an hour the entire distance. Most of my horses galloped the twenty kilometers. I lost five horses. I've got something like twenty horses with saddle sores so big that you couldn't cover them with a shelter half."

The toll of the other troops was the same. Now, if there is one thing that is a tradition, and an excellent one, in the American cavalry, it is the heritage of good marching—a heritage from old Indian-fighting days, when six-hundred mile hikes were the usual thing. An American cavalry officer would feel disgraced and apologetic if one saddle sore appeared among seventy horses, after a week's steady marching.

Colonel Timmy Phelan as a cavalryman had sunk so low in the estimation of his regiment that there was no hope of his ever retrieving his reputation.

"And the worst of it is," Haskins went on, "that the War Department rates him as a very fine officer! No one in the War Department will ever know how he's butchered a fine regiment of cavalry, way out here in the Philippine Islands. They are not interested in such details!"

Even the colonel must have noticed the hostility of men and officers the day following, for he began to look a little apprehensive. But not for long. He was of the type that glories in enmity. Did an entire regiment hate him wholeheartedly, he began really to feel that he had been a great success as a commanding officer.

THE RAINY season was about due. The low, muttering sullenness that precedes it, filled the air and depressed men's spirits. They faced weeks of steady downpour alternated by fierce heat which filled the air with steam. Leather boots or belts covered themselves overnight with mildew. The dank humidity covered one's skin with prickly heat and filled one's soul with irritation. It is a time to try men's souls.

A boxing bout was arranged by the athletic officer. Owing to the lowering skies it was held in the great post gymnasium. Davies went in company with the other officers. The regimental athletic officer was a tall frowning New Englander. Arkwright did not like negroes. He made no bones of his distaste for the men and their race.

Now there is no one keener to sense dislike for his race than is a negro.

Arkwright was especially irritable that night. The great gymnasium was filled with solemn, black faces staring at him. Several of the most promising fighters had failed to show up. The boxing match was delayed for half an hour. The colonel, sitting up in the balcony, had called to him several times.

Finally the first two fighters came on. They were two long, lanky, yellow negroes. A steady pattering of rain on the roof deepened to the roar of the first tropical downpour. Men were uneasy. The air was charged with electricity and with the rumble and roar of cataclysmic thunderings.

It was obvious from the first blow exchanged by the two negroes that their hearts were not in the fighting. They leaned into each other's arms through the first round and softly tapped away as if in mortal terror of bruising each other with an unkind smack.

Arkwright was refereeing. At the conclusion of the first round he went up to each corner and remonstrated with the men. His face was flushed. They looked sullen. The bell rang.

Up they got and gingerly approached each other. Hoots and calls echoed from the soldiers. The two clinched. The officer broke them apart roughly—a little too roughly, for a silence fell upon the watching negroes.

Again they approached each other. One reached out and gently tapped the other on his chin. The man, who had been touched, threw up his arms theatrically and sank to the floor. Hoots of derision and cat-calls filled the air.

Arkwright counted ten. The man still lay supine. The referee's eyes blazed with anger. Walking over to the prone negro, the white officer deliberately kicked him.

Davies, watching tensely, heard a sigh go up from the thousand negroes who filled the hall. Then all was silence. Outside, the noise of the storm continued. Inside, every one sat as if carved in stone.

Suddenly, as if the same thought flashed through every negro's head, there was the rumble of a thousand chairs being moved. The men had risen. A low angry muttering filled the air—a hum as of an immense, angry hive of bees, disturbed and vengeful. It was an ominous sound, a sound that, once heard, could never be forgotten, a sound to send cold shivers up the spine.

The colonel rose from his seat in the balcony. Davies looked at him, worried. It only needed a spark to start something.

"Get back to your seats, you men," bellowed Timmy Phelan angrily.

The soldiers passing underneath the balcony raised their eyes to his. What he saw there made the colonel's face turn pale.

An angry roar suddenly filled the hall. Davies heard the word—

"Kill!"

In the rear of the mass, pouring out of the building, Davies suddenly saw old Sergeant Turnbull and fifteen or twenty men of the machine-gun troop. Rushing down the narrow steps, he jumped among them just as they were about to leave.

"Men," he called sharply. "Sergeant Turnbull!"

His men paused uncertainly. In their eyes was a queer, drugged look, as if they were walking in their sleep. Again he called. This time dawning recognition came into their eyes. He seemed to have awakened them at last.

"Listen, you men of the *corps d' élite*, the rest of the regiment is likely to do something foolish. It's up to us to stop it. We can't have all these black boys getting mixed up in any foolishness. We are the brains of the regiment; we've got to stop it."

They were beginning to nod in confirmation of his words. Now was the time—or never.

"Listen, each one of you is worth twenty men. The rest of the regiment is afraid of the machine-guns. We'll run a bluff on them for their own good. You, Sergeant Scotter, take ten men. Double-quick to the barracks and bring up the guns. Sergeant Turnbull and I will follow the crowd and try to talk some sense into them."

Still they were a little uncertain.

"Come on, it's our lieutenant talkin', the lieutenant of the finest troop in the army," bellowed Sergeant Scotter suddenly.

Their wavering was over. Swiftly they followed the sergeant.

DAVIES went out into the storm with Sergeant Turnbull and the few men remaining with him. Far ahead he could hear the angry hum of a thousand voices. If only Scotter would be on time!

Hurrying through the night, he came up to the outer edges of the crowd. They were grouped in a black mass, swaying back and forth and muttering. The rain had stopped. A fitful ray of moonlight made things partially visible.

From the direction of the barracks he could see a group of men hurrying toward his white uniform. They were carrying something. As they came nearer, he recognized his machine-guns.

Near-by was a stout wooden hurdle used for schooling the horses over the jumps. Davies leaped upon this. He filled his lungs.

"Attention!" he shouted with every ounce of energy he could command.

Black heads were raised swiftly at the familiar word. A silence fell over the assembly. All eyes were fixed on the white uniform of the officer, seen dimly through the gloom. A low growl went up; again Davies heard that word—

"Kill!"

Turning, Davies shouted out the commands for machine-gun fire.

"Action front— Load!" he commanded.

There was the harsh rattle of magazines being inserted in the guns. A whisper went up and traveled swiftly through the crowd. "Machine-guns!"

Some memory of those torn and riddled targets must have come to them.

"Silence!" shouted Davies, his voice clear and steady and vibrating with authority. "Come to attention."

The men before him sensed the ring of command. They waited silent.

"There will be no more foolishness," went on Davies in the silence. "What's the matter with you men, anyway?" he scolded in that resolute but kindly voice that so many of the negroes knew. "The machine-gun troop is right here to stop any silly moves made by a lot of recruits among you. I want you old soldiers to get a grip on yourselves. You are acting like children. If one white man acts foolishly is that any reason for you to act still more foolishly? Don't be children."

Davies laughed suddenly.

"Do you men think that all the foolish men are in your race? Can't you let us have one or two foolish white men of our own, without getting so uppity about it?"

A silence followed this for a second. Then a chuckle went up from near-by. It was followed by a general chuckle, and then a laugh went through the black mass of men before him. Davies wiped his forehead. He found his hand trembling strangely. But the crisis was over. He had won them.

"Now you run along back to your barracks and forget your sore heads," he concluded.

There was a great shuffling and stamping of feet.

"Yas, yas, dat's Lieutenant Davies—he sure is right. Plumb lot of foolishness, sure enough; dese here young soldiers is gettin' too uppity yas, yas."

Davies heard the voices disappearing off in the darkness and the shuffle of many feet on the barracks porches.

And that was how a mutiny was averted in the Nth Cavalry, a mutiny that, had it gone through, would have resulted in untold deaths and misery and the eventual blotting out of an entire regiment of splendid colored soldiers. For had they killed their officers in their blind craze of slaughter, they would most certainly have been hunted and harried and shot down like dogs by the other troops in the islands, and would have been a blot on the name of their race for all time.

A few days later orders came for Davies to make a trip to the United States. He packed his trunks and bade farewell to his friends. On his way to the railroad station he drove down for a last look at the machine-gun troop. The barracks was strangely deserted. Disappointed, he went on to the station.

There, lined up, guidon and all, was the entire machine-gun troop under command of Sergeant Turnbull.

Going down the line of men he shook each by the hand. The train was whistling in that annoying, persistent way Philippino trains have. He swung on to the lower step of the nearest car. The troop broke ranks and pressed around him silently.

Sergeant Turnbull grasped his hand. There were tears in the old man's eyes.

"Don't forget, sah, Lieutenant—" the old man's voice broke—"that this heah is yoh troop; wheahever yoh is and howsomever, dis here troop is your troop."

The train started to move. Davies found tears in his own eyes. The black faces before him were full of that troubled, pathetic look that a negro has when he is deserted and forlorn. Slowly they passed out of sight. Davies blew his nose loudly before going into the car.

THERE was a long silence as Major Davies finished speaking. The range details were taking down the red flags and the men were picking up the empty cartridges from the firing points.

"Well, Montgomery," asked the major, "does that make anything clear to you?"

"Yes, sir," replied the young captain emphatically, "but what finally happened to Timmy Phelan?"

Davies grinned.

"When I got to Manila," he announced, "I was called into the inspector-general's office. There I was put under oath and made to tell all I knew of Timmy Phelan's mishandling of the regiment. Everything I said was put down by a stenographer. I took the transport, knowing, from all the signs, that Timmy Phelan was having a bang-up court martial prepared for him by the Philippine Department." Davies stopped and gazed over the mesa.

"Well, did they get him?" pressed Montgomery.

"Not exactly," Davies shook his head. "When everything was set, and the colonel had been notified that he was to appear for trial, a cablegram came through from the War Department, making him a brigadier general and ordering him to Washington. Of course, that squashed the charges," Davies finished lightly.

There was a long silence.

"Major," asked Montgomery, "what's that expression about the letter and the spirit? Seems to me it sort of applies to what you've just been telling me."

"You mean the letter killeth and the spirit maketh to live?"

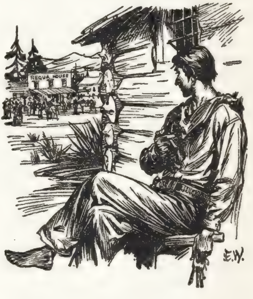
Davies rose and stretched himself.

"You said it. They should put that as a warning at the end of every general order issued in the Army."

## *Justice and the Spirit of the Mob*

# Spring Law

### By BRUCE JOHNS



"IF THEY lynch him," said "Potato Wauggie" firmly, settling his *pince-nez* on his fine nose, "I shan't do a thing. A brute that could waylay a kindly old fellow like Benton and murder him on his own doorstep for a little sack of gold-dust, deserves all he gets. And to try a jail-break afterwards— No, sir! Shan't do a c'ndemned thing, so long as it isn't in the township. That's what I've told the boys—"

He broke off and flushed. The color ran up his long, bald and sun-burned head. He eyed the Indian standing before him with a certain defiance. Then he hooked his heels over the rungs of his rawhided chair, as it leaned against the log office of the justice of peace of Plateau Requa and indicated that he wished to return to the reading of his Horace.

"Klamath Joe," the turnkey at the jail, shifted his feet and spat. Over his proud beak of a nose, his beady, intelligent eyes swept the broad river where the steelhead lurked in rocky caverns. He reluctantly turned back to the town which slept on the river-bank. It was hot and the wind smelt of sun-steeped growth. There was the yeasty uneasiness of early spring in the air.

"You justice of peace," he accused in his deep voice. "You gotta do somethin'."

Potato Wauggie put his book down with an annoyed gesture. His blue gaze bit into the Indian, coldly.

"I'm sworn to maintain the peace in Plateau Requa," he informed him. "I have done so for twenty years. I hope to continue. What occurs outside the township is the business of the sheriff. Now," he continued, tapping his worn old classic with one bony hand on which a seal ring shone dully, "if they take that scoundrel out from the jail and kill him, provided it occurs outside the township, I shan't do a c'ndemned thing. Not one c'ndemned thing! Right?"

Klamath Joe sneered.

"You mighty careful, all of a sudden."

Potato Wauggie glared.

"Are you inferring I'm taking a cowardly advantage of your being left alone at the jail?" he asked in pure Oxfordese.

The Indian shrugged, and a dull brick color mounted into the old man's face Without a word the Indian turned on his heel and began placing his bare feet in the hot dust that lay between him and the little log jail that stood on a knoll at the end of the town.

Thomas Linforth Augustus Trowbridge-Penell, otherwise known as Potato Wauggie, once of Woodstock-on-Eppington, Sussex, turned his pages nervously in the sun. The color had not yet left his long face, and under his gnawed white mustache his lips closed angrily.

"Looks bad," he muttered and looked down the town's one street to the Requa House, where on the veranda groups of men kept meeting, talking and dispersing with something hurried and secret in their manner. "Damn that Indian, trying to make me feel that he and I are the only constituted authority in the town. Agh!"

His indignant snort echoed in the clear California air. Potato Wauggie was suffering from his reputation. His Indian name meant "incorruptible man who grows good potatoes."

"Fine deputy sheriff Monahan is—the fat, lazy beggar. Clearing out for the county-seat, just because of a toothache. Just when he knew how unruly the men are getting about the Pole down there in the jail. Can't see how Joe stomachs the man!"

He worried at his mustache and wriggled in the stout chair. He subsided at last into a watchful, fuming silence, his mind running on Old Man Benton, his friend for two decades and the victim of the stolid Polish mucker down in the jail.

Everybody in the county had known Old Man Benton. He was a twinkling-eyed, lean old scout whom the children followed when he came driving his little white burro, Hortense, into town. He made his little ranch, up on the slope of Thunder Mountain, a sanctuary for birds and game, during the seasons. They flocked in upon him like frightened youngsters.

All summer the young does brought their fawns to munch the sweet peaches and apples that grew around his cabin, and nightly the old man fed coveys of quail that were plump and saucy as young chickens. Everybody knew him and how he eked out his living from the mine-shaft on his place. Once a man had come up from San Francisco to write him up, and his picture had been in the city papers—"Robert Benton and his wild pets."

Plateau Requa regarded him not only as a personal friend but also as a civic asset. His brutal murder shocked not only their affections; it struck at the roots of their municipal pride. There had been ugly talk afoot ever since the man had been brought in from Three Star Mine two days ago.

Back at the jail, Klamath Joe squatted on his heels and thought. The Pole's attempt at jail-breaking, the night before, had been an affront to the whole town. The Plateau Requa calaboose had been a labor of love, a community affair. It had been built in two days of hilarious labor, the men cutting the logs from the pine ridges about the town. The blacksmith had welded the bars, and the women of the town had held a community supper the night it was finished. There had been dancing on the hard-packed earth in the open space in front of the new building. It had all been very gay and pleasant.

Klamath Joe scratched his head. It brought his fingers into contact with a tender place—a great welt that ran across one temple. The Pole had given it to him with one of the iron bars, wrenched loose from the window. The turnkey had brought his midday meal into the cell and had bent over to set down the tray, when the giant brought the iron down crushingly on his skull. It would have been a fatal blow, had the Indian not spun around on his bare heel and taken it glancingly. He had just been able to sog home the butt of his gun on the big fellow's temple, and the two had sunk simultaneously into unconsciousness. Deputy Monahan had found them both lying there.

He had dragged the Indian out and revived him, eyeing with terrified respect the inert figure of the prisoner. It had been all he could do to haul the great hulk into the other cell and get him securely chained before intelligence began to flicker back to the small eyes. The Pole began to curse. He writhed in his chains like a Titan. Deputy Monahan felt his blood chill. There was a demoniac fury in the man's threats. When Gil Poggi took the night stage down to the county-seat, Deputy Monahan was aboard. He said he was about crazy with an ulcerated tooth. Gil Poggi said he certainly didn't look like himself.

Klamath Joe had gotten up quietly, but with the savage anger of his people. No one had ever struck the Indian with impunity. During the war there had been stories abroad among the Grizzlies, about this lithe, swarthy man with the touch on the trigger, like velvet, and a row of sharpshooter's medals on his khaki blouse.

Once a brash lieutenant had, in a moment of strung-up anger, flicked him with a swagger stick and called him a "Digger." To the high-nosed people of the Klamath, that is as if one had questioned the color of the half-moons at the base of a southern gentleman's finger-nails.

It had happened one night that this young fellow, with Joe and two others, had been detailed to a listening-post expedition. The poor young officer had weakened at the last moment. He got his men up to the indicated spot, through shell-holes filled with unspeakable things, and had lain down with them in a muck of mud to listen to the voices of a regiment of Saxons, less than ten feet away. Then a star-shell had shown them up. The young lieutenant was a man of imagination. It had been too much for him; he had turned and left the men there.

The official report had said that he had been shot by a sniper as he made his way back alone to the lines. Of the two that came back from that party—Joe was one—nothing was ever said. But it was thought odd that a sniper should find any cover in that desolate sweep of mud.

THE STAGE from the county-seat came rumbling over the river bridge. It bounced up the slope and chugged to a stop at the jail door. Gil Poggi leaned down and beckoned. Klamath Joe floated out to meet him.

Deputy Monahan had sent word that it would take him all week to get his teeth fixed up—he was suffering something terrible. Joe had better get some one to stay at the jail with him, on account of the desperation of the prisoner. Somebody big. "Gabe" Bettincourt would do.

Klamath Joe drew a small design in the dust with one great toe and murmured—

"Yeh?"

Gil Poggi asked:

"What's up, Joe? Somethin' funny goin' on. What all them men doin', hangin' around the Requa House this time of day? They don't ack natural."

The Indian shrugged.

"Talkin'," he muttered disgustedly. "Got nothin' else to do."

Then his black head and sateen shirt, black, too, melted into the deep shadow by the jail door. Two legs in faded blue jeans extended into the sun. Klamath Joe settled into what was apparently a dozing immobility.

"Jed" Abernathy came up the slope, a sack of flour resting on one shoulder. His blue shirt was soaked with sweat, and his skinny old legs trembled a little in the early heat. He stopped in the shadow of the jail and leaned his flour sack against the logs. He wiped off his nut-brown face with a worn sleeve.

"Hot, ain't it?" he piped.

"Yeh."

"Mind my settin' on the step a little? On my way home. Been down listenin' to the fellers. You'd ought hear 'em, Joe."

"Yeh?"

"Yeh. Talkin' big. Ed Ellison's drunk. Awful mouthy. Do' know you might's well keep an eye out, Joe. You 'member the time he worked 'em all to horsewhippin' Willoughby, and they found out afterward he never stole the hoss at all?"

"Yeh."

The ancient mumbled off a bite of plug-cut. He masticated restfully for a little and got his wind. Then he turned his anxious, pale gaze on the somnolent Indian.

"You got the feller safe, ain't you, Joe? Ain't no chance him gittin' out agin?"

"Naw."

"Well," worried the old man, "Benton and I was friends. No better feller ever lived. Mighty few like him. But jest the same it don't seem right not to give the Pole a chance."

Klamath Joe broke into unwonted loquacity.

"Don't you worry, Jed. Nothin's gonna happen."

He managed to put into it contempt, assurance, comfort.

"Mighty glad, Joe."

After a little, old Abernathy paddled off to his mountain cabin. But the turnkey still idled by the jail door.

THE AFTERNOON lengthened. About four, Potato Wauggie came ambling along the river-bank. Over his shoulder he had a specimen can.

Klamath Joe rose and went out to meet him, as he came abreast of the jail.

"Want you to keep the jail," he remarked.

Potato Wauggie shook his head.

"No. Willie Bluejay just brought me word that he'd found a patch of new scarlet fungus down on Beaver Creek."

The old Oxonian had a passion for fungi. The wet northern California woods abounded with them and he was an authority on them. His monographs appeared in obscure and scientific publications that Plateau Requa wotted not of. All the Indian children in the vicinity were subsidized into finding new specimens for him.

"You stay," urged Klamath Joe. "My mama, she sick. I gotta go down Tchipanichan ranch see her."

Potato Wauggie looked at him impatiently.

"No, no!"

"I bring you back what you want when I come," bribed Joe.

Potato Wauggie seemed to come out of a scientific daze. For the first time he looked at the Indian sharply.

"What is it you want?" he demanded.

The Indian's eyes were as impenetrable as agate. He raised one great flipper in a gesture that conveyed his complete innocence of guile.

"You're trying to trap me," accused the old man. "You—you're trying to abandon me with the responsibility. I'll not do it!"

The other stood carved of dark wood.

The old man turned on one sockless heel.

"I won't," he said flatly. "C'ndemned. if I do."

Joe said mildly:

"I can git Gabe Bettincourt to stay with you. He's good an' big. But I'd want you to be boss. Officer the law."

Potato Wauggie seemed to swell. His face crimsoned; his blue eyes got steely.

"That'll do," he told the turnkey crisply. "You force my hand. Very well. Get on your way, wherever you're going."

Potato Wauggie followed him into the jail. He strode, stiff-legged with wrath, and his Adam's apple leapt spasmodically. The Indian handed him a string with some keys on it.

"I be back before supper," he murmured. "This one, cell door. This one, outside."

He looked levelly into the old man's eyes. The Englishman stared back.

"So you think," he observed icily, "that they'll be here before night."

Klamath Joe's face never altered.

"Mebbe so, mebbe not. Lotta them boys comin' in from the ranches, gittin' drunk. Git crazy. Can't tell."

He floated out of the door on his brown feet and was crossing the open space. Then he dipped into the river trail and was gone. The old Englishman stood in the door, looking at the green spot where he had disappeared.

"Never thought he was yellow before," he muttered slowly. "Queer."

Then he began to look carefully about the little pine room. Potato Wauggie was the survivor of fifteen years of frontier warfare in Afghanistan and the upper provinces of India. That survival was by reason of a good many qualities of mental alertness.

The room had but one window, so he moved the heavy rawhided chair in which fat Deputy Monahan habitually dozed, midway between it and the two doors. He gave one impersonal glance into the cell, where the big body of the murderer loomed. By the light from the high window he could see the bullet head bent to the massive chest. Then he sat down and tucked his heels over the chair rungs. He looked like a mild old gentleman eying the sunny afternoon in serene dreaminess; but a close observer would have seen small bunches of muscles taut along his jaws and a certain springiness in the way his lean old shanks rested against the chair.

KLAMATH JOE was plunging along the river trail which he had known since boyhood. He was thinking deeply and his bare feet avoided the sharp corners of the stones, unconsciously. He was startled back to his surroundings by hearing some one coming toward him, crashing heavily through the brush on the hillside. He stepped into the shadow of a granite boulder and waited.

Gabe Bettincourt came panting through the waist-high chaparral, his bare curly black head and wide shoulders powdered over with the fine flowers of the wild lilac. He stopped before the Indian and drew a long breath.

"Saw yuh leave. Took a short cut over the hill to ketch yuh. Wanted yuh to know, Joe, they's trouble comin'. Them boys is in from Sligo's ranch. They ain't seen town since Christmas and they're out to raise hell. An' Ed Ellison's talky drunk."

He paused. His kind, little black eyes rested anxiously on the Indian's impassive face.

"Yeh?" said Klamath Joe.

Gabe scratched his ear where a spray of lilac flowers tickled him.

"I was goin' over to the Mariposa mine," he offered, "to see my gal. But I can stay. Monahan's a skunk to leave you alone like this. I hear, too, they's a passel of fellers driftin' in from Frisco fer the spring lumberin'. Lord knows which way they'll jump if they's trouble. They ain't likely to keep outa it. Not with Ed Ellison and bootleg."

Klamath Joe broke off a succulent spray of herbage that had found root on the mossy surface of the granite and chewed it.

"Ain't gonna be no trouble. Go along and see yer gal. And leave Monahan outa this."

The big fellow stared at him doubtfully.

"Well, awright, only I hate to—"

"G'wan!" snapped Joe.

He moved out of the shade and with no further adieu moved off on the trail. Gabe Bettincourt looked after him. He shook his head and after a moment, started back to town.

The Indian had come to an opening on the river-bank, where sprawled a group of pine huts, together with some rows of corn and a patch of pumpkins. A flock of Indian children played there, their bright cotton dresses and black heads shining in the sun. A dozen dogs dozed in the shadows.

Klamath Joe stepped along to a house under a great cottonwood tree. A tall woman sat on the doorstep, combing out her long dark hair. Joe sank down beside her. They roasted in the sun for a time; then the man began to talk. After a little they went into the small house.

The woman lighted a blue-flame oil-stove and took down a clean kettle from the wall. From a row of cans on a shelf she began to take pinches of dried leaves, bits of roots and some dark powders. The mess in the kettle boiled and sang. Then the woman cooled it and poured a little of the dark liquor into a bottle. Klamath Joe slipped the vial into his shirt.

HE BEGAN to track back to the jail in the late afternoon. The shadow had already fallen on the river as he went. But he paused by a deep pool, bottle-green under the dark rocks. He shucked off his shirt and jeans and dived in. cleanly. The green water closed over him. For a little while he moved soundlessly as an otter. Then he slipped out and drew on the same drab husk. A few moments later he was nearing the jail.

Potato Wauggie rose from the raw-hided chair between the two doors. One of his eyes was completely closed. His shirt was in ribbons and the knuckles of his fists were bloody. His one eye gleamed coldly.

"I trust your esteemed mother is quite herself," he enunciated from his puffed lips.

The Indian merely asked—

"Who?"

Potato Wauggie's face twisted into what was intended for a grin.

"The boys from Sligo's. They've been in all day listening to Whispering Ed Ellison. Didn't know he was such a friend of Benton's. Seems to me I've heard Benton say he was pretty much of a stinker, but to hear him talk now you'd think they'd been lifelong friends. Doubtless it's the bootleg he's been guzzling. He has been urging the boys to take the law in their own hands. They thought they'd try a little. It was," concluded the old man dryly, "mostly bad liquor and the spring weather, maybe."

Klamath Joe asked—

"They hurt you?"

The old man shook his head happily. There was in his eye the light that thirty years before had been present when he had dived head first and alone into a milling crowd of fighting coolies in a low quarter in Cawnpore. It had won him another nickname that day, one that in the vernacular meant "Englishman with gunpowder in his fists."

The Englishman shook himself and went back to his earlier manner.

"I trust I may be allowed to leave?"

"Sure."

Potato Wauggie stepped for the door, his bare brown leg flickering through the slit linen of his trousers.

He stopped in the door.

"Perhaps," he sneered, "you have other female relatives you'd care to visit. If so, I might suggest that you put it off for a little while. I think you'll have trouble a little later."

Klamath Joe let him get outside the door before he spoke. But his voice reached the old man clearly.

"'Bout eight, nine o'clock, I figure. Better bring a gun."

Potato Wauggie's lip lifted. He didn't answer, but limped on down the slope toward the office of the justice of peace and his shipshape little dwelling behind it, with its orderly patch of garden.

THE REQUA HOUSE dinner bell clanged, and the talking men began to drift inside. Klamath Joe could hear their uninterrupted conversation through the open windows of the hotel. Then an Indian boy came shuffling over with a tin tray. It had on it Joe's dinner and the evening meal for the prisoner. Joe set it down on the pine table in the front room. He looked the food over and contented himself with a quart or so of scalding coffee and a piece of cornbread. His big hands passed swiftly over the clutter of porcelain bird-baths that held the greasy food. Then he set the tray on top of the round-bellied stove and began to move the furniture about the room.

Across the doorway he tilted the heavy table. He backed it by a tool chest. Over the one window he spiked the wooden door which had closed between the two rooms of the jail. He extinguished the lamp, and went back into the empty cell, where he busied himself.

From the next cubicle the Pole heard him at work.

"Hey," he complained. "Don't I eat?"

"Shut up!" said the Indian.

It was eight o'clock before he was back in the front room. Then he saw that a mass of men had detached themselves from the milling groups around the Requa House steps. They moved forward up the knoll, a many-headed figure. The piny hills had shut the town into a rich blue-black twilight, lighted with the many stars of the northern California coast country.

It was a sweet evening, with that hint of something impending, which spring always brings—a hidden electric current that sets men to doing mad things. Add corn liquor to early spring and the result is a dangerous explosive.

Klamath Joe sank the black top of his

head on a level with his table barricade and peered out. He hunched forward the weight that sagged under his shirt by his left armpit.

The men stopped as they topped the slope. They drew together and stared at the dark box of the jail. Then one man made a move forward, and they all followed like sheep. They reached the packed space fifteen feet from the jail door.

"Hey!" yelled a voice. "We've come fer Yertin! Better come on out, Joe!"

The Indian recognized the tones of Whispering Ed Ellison, the loud-mouthed rancher from over the hills. His voice was thick and uncertain. Behind him the turnkey heard the Pole give a whine of horror.

"Damn! They after me?"

"Hi, you, Joe! Answer, er we'll shoot yer door in!"

The Indian spoke from the gloom.

"Git along! You gonna get in trouble, you try that."

A snarl, as from a pack of hungry dogs, went out into the stillness of the summer night. Far above, the impartial stars shone with a million silver points; the pine trees moved in a fragrant wind. This sudden flare of blood-raging men stood like a dark excrescence upon the placid face of the evening.

Whispering Ed made one more try.

"We ain't gonna stand no nonsense! We're gonna string up that dirty Pole, killin' a nice old fella like Benton. If yuh don't want yer neck broke, yuh better listen to reason."

Klamath Joe didn't answer. He closed the door.

Then they were on the jail steps, fighting and growling like a pack of wolves. The Indian heard the glass shower in the window and the surprized grunt of the men as their fists struck hard planking. He felt his way to the stove and then stepped into the back room.

"They're after yuh," he told the quivering hulk of flesh in the cell. "Here's yer supper. Eat it. Yuh'll need it."

He lighted a match. The man stared at him, a froth-flecked animal.

"Eat!" commanded the Indian harshly.

Yertin mouthed—

"They'll git me—"

Klamath Joe drew his gun from under his arm-pit. In the wavering light the Pole saw the ugly barrel.

"Eat yer food, er I'll kill yuh!"

The man made a stupid pass at the cold victuals on the tray. The match went out. The Indian heard him breathe sobbingly, as he gulped some of the stuff.

Outside, the men were beginning to shout. Some one had already thought of a tree-trunk battering-ram, and the little building was quivering with the regular strokes of the manned wooden piston. Feet pounded on the roof; in one corner the starlight was coming in where men were ripping the shingles off.

Through the din—

"Eat!" shouted the Indian in the ear of the terrified murderer. Then, still in darkness, Joe bent down and unlocked the leg chains that held the man to the bunk.

"Git up!"

The man rose stupified.

"Git ahead of me into the other cell; and don't fergit I got the drop on yuh!"

The man began to shuffle his feet, out of the little cubicle and to feel his way along the wall.

Pandemonium was on without. There came, through the interstices of the high-barred windows, dancing flares of blood-red light.

"Got brush fire," muttered Joe. "Burn us out, hey?"

The man moving before him whimpered. The turnkey gave him a directing poke in the small of the back with the gun.

"Git in. Stand against that window with yer arms up. And don't fergit I can see yuh fine against that window."

The big man moved over and hung himself against the wall.

"Arms up!" snapped Joe.

He swung up the heavy muscles against the high bars. They gave under the weight, swung wholly free of their embedding mortar. Yertin gave a strangled cry. Then he moaned—

"God, I'm too sick!"

Klamath Joe spoke in his great hairy ear.

"Yuh can't git outa there. Hill's over yon. You make it to that pine tree; men won't see yuh. Up to you to git to the brush. Wait till they git around in front."

The heavy door was already giving, but the village blacksmith had put his heart into his work when he had made the great hasp and hinges. They yelled for more men. The stragglers, who were wandering noisily about the jail, began to go to the front for a concerted shove, a last rush that should break down the straining door.

"Now!" said Joe.

Yertin's cable-like muscles heaved him up to the window ledge. He swung out and dropped to the sandy earth. The ground was lighted with a crimson glare and atop the jail men stood and made frantic gestures. Yertin began to run, but his feet moved with nightmarish slowness. He staggered; his ankles seemed leaden.

Once he flung up his hand and seemed to dash something from his gaze. Klamath Joe, hanging out of the window, could hear his breath labor.

The runner was yet twenty feet away from the pine tree, a low-spreading brushy shelter. The sand sucked at his feet.

Then Klamath Joe opened his mouth, and from it issued a sound that was like a locomotive gone mad, a terrible piercing yell that rose above the general bedlam as if it were a steam siren.

In an instant men came pouring around the corners of the jail. And in that instant, clear in the fire-light, Joe's arm came out of the window. A long spurt of flame leapt from it. Yertin, his fingers already touching the green boughs of the pine, went down. His giant body sprawled out like a great black bird.

"Ah-h!"

The sound went up from the men in a released gasp. Then they began to run forward. But Klamath Joe had dropped from the window and was before them at the fallen figure. He turned it over with his bare foot and leaned over it. They saw the bloody smears on the head. Then he stood up, his gun still in his great brown hands.

"Dead," he announced, and his opaque eyes ran over the men who had stopped in a semicircle a few feet back. He took them in, one by one; they shifted uncertainly under his gaze.

"Any you wanta do anythin' more?"

His metallic syllables rattled around the circle like shot.

Whispering Ed Ellison pushed forward. His little red eyes were still burning with alcoholic light.

"He ain't either dead! I seen'm twitch! I wanta make sure the devil's dead!"

The Indian made the slightest of movements with his gun.

"You got any doubt I hit'm?" he queried in an even tone.

The fuddled rancher stopped. He looked uneasily at the Indian, standing over the prostrate man.

"Naw!" he mumbled at last.

Then a tall figure was fighting its way through the packed circle. Potato Wauggie burst into the open space, an old cavalry pistol in either hand, tears running down his face. He was crying with rage.

"Joe!" he gritted. "I went to sleep! Oh, hell! Went to sleep like an old granny! I'm too late!"

His bruised face was ludicrous in his self-despising rage.

The thin lips of the Indian spread into a grin.

"'S'awright," he soothed the old man. "You gotta take charge here now—place of the sheriff."

Potato Wauggie turned and looked about the staring men. Then Major Trowbridge-Penell barked in the old voice of Cawnpore:

"Get, you lousy beggars! You've done enough for one night. Get!"

There was an angry snarl from the group. But the white figure suddenly loomed taller. There was a snap to the shoulders, and the polished bores of two guns winked in the firelight. Some one made a movement; it converted itself into a general restless stir.

Then a voice said:

"Hell, fellers! It's all over. Might's well go. The devil got what was comin' to him."

"Yeah. He's dead."

"C'mon."

One by one they began to melt away into the darkness.

POTATO WAUGGIE faced the Indian. Joe said—

"Help me carry 'm."

They staggered with the giant's weight to the shattered front door. They heaved the Pole through and laid him on the floor.

Potato Wauggie hunted for a lamp, found at last a piece of candle stuck in a bottle. The wavering light filled the wrecked room.

The old man turned to see the Indian bending over the body, a coil of heavy hemp in his hand. He was knotting the two thick ankles together and binding the flaccid hands over the broad chest.

"W-what—" gasped Potato Wauggie.

Joe raised his black shock head and looked at the justice. He said nothing, but between the two men there passed a whole conversation.

Potato Wauggie stepped over and pulled down the man's lower lid. He raised his head and stared at Joe.

"Doped!"

"Yeah," admitted Klamath Joe. "Somethin' my mama makes."

"Didn't you hit him at all?"

"Sure. Creased 'm on the head. Didn't hurt 'm much—stunned 'm."

The Indian was fumbling in the rubbish. He found an old coat and began to draw it on distastefully.

"Say," he asked the Englishman in a quiet drawl, "you know Deputy Monahan's had false teeth twenty, thirty year?"

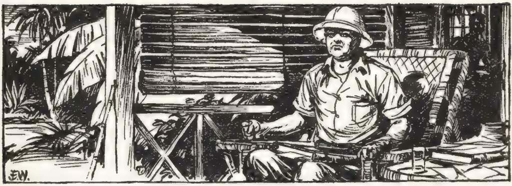
"Eh?"

They looked at each other and a grin spread between them.

"Where you going?" demanded Potato Wauggie.

Klamath Joe answered him seriously.

"County-seat. Gonna git Sheriff Beasley. This town needs a lesson. Ain't nobody here got no respec' fer law!"



## *When the War came to the New Hebrides*

# *Victory*

### By J. D. NEWSOM

WHEN the dogs began to bark James Dilke poured himself another drink and blew out the light. The dogs barked louder than ever, and the angry voice of Monsieur Gaston Provain came out of the darkness:

"What is it, then? Must one be set upon by mad hounds when one attempts to enter? Dilke! Dilke! I demand to speak with you. Dilke, most imperatively must I have words with you!"

M. Provain was outside the fence surrounding Dilke's property; the dogs were on the inside, but the gate opened outward and the angry, underfed setters were aware of the fact. He was forced to put all his weight against the gate, at the risk of having his weight bitten, to keep the wild animals from getting out and devouring him.

"I'm not at home," answered Dilke, shouting at the top of his lungs. "I'm in bed—sleepin'. It's two o'clock in the mornin', and I'm sleepin', I tell you!"

"Arouse then! Awake, Dilke! *Nom de Dieu*, must I be eaten in the raw state by these hounds of perdition? Arouse, for I have news of the most cataclysmic."

The setters were pawing at the gate and snapping at his legs through the bars. At any moment, as he well knew, they might break through and leap at his throat, not to mention more exposed portions of his corpulent anatomy.

"G'way," ordered Dilke. "'Streperous Frenchman! Been out on the tiles. S'prized at you. Go t' bed, go t' sleep—sh't up! I'm soun' 'sleep. No power on earth can gemme up!"

He drank the tumblerful of raw whisky at a gulp, then closed his eyes to convince himself that he was really sound asleep, but the room spun around at such an alarming rate and at such unexpected angles that he had to open them again.

"Dash it all!" he grumbled. "Bally nuisance, this! I must be getting old. Heat's too much for poor old Dilke. Heat and loneliness. Poor old bean!"

He patted himself on the knee, and nodded his head as the dogs bayed more savagely than ever.

"Tear him t' pieces," he chuckled. "Two o'clock in the mornin'. Never heard of such goings on. 'T's not right, 't's not genteel— Frog," he shouted, "Frog, g'way!"

"I will shoot!" Provain cried. "I will shoot them dead. The gun is in my hand. I aim at the dogs. I give you ten seconds and not a second more. I demand to speak to you, Dilke!"

"If tha'z case," decided Dilke, "I'd better wake up quick, eh wha'? One, two, three, four—" He drew a deep breath and yelled, "Call off the dogs, Tommy. Visitor wants see me."

A Kanaka houseboy, who had been squatting on the veranda, chewing betelnut and waiting to put his master to bed, whistled to the dogs and shambled down the path to chase them away. They retreated, snarling.

M. Provain trotted up to the house and jerked open the screen door with so much violence that it nearly came off its hinges.

"If you gotta match," Dilke said pleasantly, "you can ligh' the ligh'. I can't get up juz yet. Wakin' up so sudden makes me dizzy."

A light flared in the darkness. Cupping his hands about the flame, Provain crossed the room with a firm, heavy tread until he collided with the table. Something fell off and rumbled about on the floor.

"Tha's shwisky bot'," groaned Dilke. "If the cork's come out it's calamity, nothing less. Only got two dozen bot's left. Have to ration m'self. 'S'awful!"

"What," cried Provain, "is a little whisky?"

He groped about for the lamp, upsetting in quick succession a water jug, a can of tobacco, an alarm clock and two glasses.

"It is as nothing compared to the—to the—"

His fingers closed on the lamp stand and he became absorbed in the complicated task of removing the hot chimney.

"'S no sense in smashing all I p'ssess," protested Dilke. "S'not my fault 'f I'm dizzy. Two o'clock in the morning!" he became indignant. "'T's not genteel. I'm s'prized at you, Mister Gastong Provain, if that's your name. You been drinking." He sniffed so hard that he choked. "I can smell it. 'S'disgusting, that's what it is—disgusting! Still, I'm a goo' fellow; I can put up with a lot. That's me—Dilke, good old bean."

Provain was doing intricate things which required his whole attention. Abruptly another match crackled and a yellow flame crept around the lamp wick. He clamped the glass chimney in place. The shadows retreated, revealing Dilke's terrible living room. It appeared to have been struck by a high wind which had knocked the furniture askew. Papers were scattered about on the floor; the table was heaped with dirty plates; every rickety chair in the room was piled high with newspapers, magazines, books and a strange assortment of clothing.

Even the pictures on the walls were tilted at uncomfortable angles, and a stuffed albatross, clumsily nailed to the wall, was being removed, fragment by fragment, by a swarm of ants, which crawled in a black line between the bird and a hole in the woodwork just above a framed picture of Edward VII in four colors.

From the depths of a dilapidated armchair Dilke blinked his eyes and smiled hospitably. He was a thin little man with a weak mouth and not overmuch chin. His cheeks were covered with a ten-day stubble which gave him a somewhat ferocious appearance. He wore a singlet and a pair of trousers of black broadcloth held up with a pair of sky-blue suspenders. One foot was bare; the other was covered with a black sock.

Compared with this wreck, M. Provain looked respectable beyond belief. His suit of black alpaca, enlivened by a red necktie attached to his shirt with a gold clip, gave him a dignified appearance; his panama hat was spotless. There was a look of funereal gravity on his face, which made Dilke remark:

"You look's if you'd swallowed a pin. Have another drink?"

"Dilke, my friend," Provain said in a

stern voice, "compose yourself. It is not for pleasure that I call upon you at this hour of the morning."

"Tha's not a clubby thing to say, but —just have one more. You can have—" he made a sweeping gesture with both arms— "you can have all I got. Every bally thing. House 'n' lot, goods, store, dogs, Tommy—abs'lutely ev'thing! I'm jolly goo' fellow, I am!"

"No. I do not want a first drink nor a second one. The *Astrolabe* called early this afternoon and the captain—"

"Tha's not news," broke in Dilke, deeply hurt. "Think of telling me that at two in the morning! Tommy came back with the mail. See it? All the papers in the world, all the books, all the magazines. I got dizzy reading 'em all—awful dizzy!"

"And what, I demand of you, does your Tommy know of world affairs? It is little he cares whether a grand civilization goes thundering to destruction. France, my France, she is menaced by the barbarians. The world is at war, Dilke, at war! Europe, she flames! *Bon Dieu!* A cable was received at Nouméa ten days ago. Austria mobilized to attack Serbia; Russia threatened to side with Serbia; Germany backed up Austria—monstrous is it not? So France decides to stand by her brave Russian ally; so Germany—"

"Ssssee here," pleaded Dilke, trying to sit up and falling back after each endeavor, "what's 't'all about, anyhow?"

"Blood will flow in streams," prophesied Provain. "It is the end of all things. The forts at Liége are being cannonaded. Belgium is attacked. But we shall be in Berlin in six weeks. The dirty Boche, ah!"

He clenched his fists and glowered at Dilke, who made himself as small as possible in the depths of the arm chair.

"Be sensible," he urged. "War at two o'clock in the morning! Shame on you. You'll be seeing snakes next, like I did last Christmas. Why, you're drunk, tha's what. Think of callin' this island, Berlin! 'S'nonsense. It's called Kalewara, and I can say it dizzy or—or not dizzy."

"*O mon Dieu!*" wailed Provain, thumping the table with his fists and thrusting his face within inches of Dilke's nose. "Have you no intelligence at all? Has your whisky rotted your mind? Dilke, for the love of God, listen to me! There is a formidable war raging in Europe, our Europe, where we both come from. Not in the New Hebrides is this war, but in *Europe*. Belgium has been attacked. England has declared war on Germany, and she is—"

"No?" breathed Dilke, staring popeyed at the speaker. "I'm s'prized. First I've heard of it." Suddenly a thought stirred in his whirling brain and his eyes filled with intense suspicion. "Who d'you say I was fighting?" he demanded harshly. "'M I fighting you or somebody else? If I'm at war with you, Frog, you better watch out. 'S'no quarter allowed. I like you personally, but—"

"We are allies!" cried Provain, flinging out his arms in a gesture of welcome. "We are fighting shoulder to shoulder against the barbarians. Side by side the gallant soldiers of France and Britain are stemming the avalanche, although one must say that you have but one hundred thousand men in the field. Still—"

"Mustn't forget the navy," added Dilke.

"No, no! The grand British navy! And, my friend, we who are exiled in the Pacific, must also do our duty. That is why I hastened to arouse you as soon as the news reached me. We must act. In the words of Camille Desmoulins, 'Audacity, more audacity and yet more audacity!'"

"Not to me, he didn't say that," retorted Dilke. "All he said to me was, 'The freight rate's going up next trip.' Tha's all he knows how to say, if you ask me."

"Camille Desmoulins was a hero of the French Revolution!" thundered the incensed Frenchman. "He died—"

"Oh, tha's all right. Must have been thinking of somebody else," Dilke said with a tolerant shrug. "Doesn't matter a bit. So we're at war. I believe you, but 's funny Tommy didn't tell me."

"It is of no interest to him, alas! To us it is all—all! I shall go to my regiment as soon as the *Astrolabe* calls on her way back to Nouméa. As a vulgar corporal I shall fight the Germans. In the meantime, here we are, representatives of two great sister nations—the only white men on Kalewara. The *entente cordiale* binds us with ineradicable ties, my friend—ties of the most sacred. Together we face the foe. We must prepare to defend this sacred soil. Should the Germans attempt to force a landing we must be ready for them."

With a last tremendous effort Dilke levered himself out of his chair and stood swaying unsteadily on his legs. He waggled one finger at Provain and said very slowly and distinctly:

"We must observe the decencies. I shall show you how an Englishman rises to the—hic—occasion."

"What are you going to do?" anxiously inquired Provain. "We must decide quickly upon a plan of action."

"Ssh! Wait. I was a gennelman once. I'll show you."

He made a tour of the room, picking up stray garments as he lurched from chair to chair and staggered off to his bedroom, carefully closing the door behind him.

"Tommy," came his hoarse voice, "Tommy, a gennelman wants you!"

The Kanaka crossed the living-room like a black shadow in a bright red loin cloth, and joined his master.

M. Provain paced nervously up and down. He wrung his hands, mopped his streaming forehead, pulled at his beard and displayed all the customary symptoms of violent excitement. To him the news was of immense importance. He would have to leave his island where he was "somebody," and go back to a line regiment where he was "nobody." Back there he might die. But the thought did not disturb him much. France was at war; therefore he, too, was at war.

Kalewara was a small island at the northern end of the New Hebrides archipelago, cut off from all intercourse with the outer world save for the mail-boat which called every three weeks. Yet he was already thinking of mustering the natives and drilling them so that they might resist all possible attacks. Their world was limited by the watery horizon, but he was composing in his mind fiery speeches in pidjin-French with which to stir their imaginations.

He was the only employer of labor on the island; his plantation was well managed and prosperous. Dilke did not count. He was supposed to run a small store, but in reality he was chiefly engaged in the merry business of drinking himself into his grave.

The Frenchman lived at one end of the island, facing the only navigable inlet; the Briton's shack was built some miles inland on the outskirts of a native village. He rarely went down to meet the mail-boat; his boys collected his letters and his trade-goods. He had made what he called "a gaudy mess" of life and he kept very much to himself. His one link with the past consisted in ordering as much printed matter as he could afford. The poorer he became the more he ordered. *Hibbert's Journal* lay in a dusty corner, unread, beneath a stack of illustrated French periodicals.

The minutes dragged by. Provain became more and more restless. He picked up the whisky bottle and poured himself a drink. He needed a stimulant. Coffee would have been better, but Dilke never had anything on hand except strong waters. The fiery stuff seemed to make Provain's blood boil in his veins. He resumed his pacing.

The heat was oppressive. The breeze had died down and the song of the mosquitoes outside the screened windows filled the air with a prolonged, nerve-racking drone.

One of Dilke's dogs scratched at the door, nosed it open and ambled in, sniffing. It caught sight of Provain and wagged its tail, which was moth-eaten and sad. No doubt that the animal wished to be friendly, but Provain was taking no risks. He knew exactly how ferocious that same beast could be if aroused. He did not like strange dogs, nor did they like him as a general rule.

"Dilke," he announced, trying to pitch his voice at just the right key so as not to annoy the dog, "Dilke, it is your hound which has entered. I pray you come at once."

"'S'nice dog," came the muffled answer. "Pat it. I'll be out in a second."

"I will kill it if it approaches," retorted Provain, speaking between his teeth.

"Here I come," Dilke called out. "Hold your fire!"

The door swung open. Dilke minced out as if he were walking on eggs, dressed in a threadbare Tuxedo, complete with patent-leather pumps and hard-boiled shirt. His face wore a look of twitching patriotic fervor.

"But, *mon Dieu*, did you not comprehend!" cried the flabbergasted Provain. "It is not for a wedding that I have summoned you—it is war that has been declared!"

"Tha's just it," agreed Dilke. "And I'm ready!" He squared his shoulders, clenched his fists, stuck out his chin, and almost fell down. "'N Englishman always hides his emotions. Phlegmatic race. As representative of my nation I offer you a drink."

"Why?" blankly inquired the Frenchman, who was not acquainted with the procedure.

"'S proper thing. A toast—Victory! As Nelson said at Trafalgar—"

A shadow crossed Mr. Provain's face.

"But we are allies now, my dear friend," he said quickly. "Let us forget those regrettable incidents."

"Regret'ble!" snorted Dilke. "I like that. Nothing of the sort, sir. Most glorious page in all history, sir. Nelson and his one eye and his one arm, he could whip— Well, never mind. I wouldn't hurt your feelings. Not much! Here we go!"

He leaned against the table and poured out the drinks.

"Sir," he said with intense seriousness, "I offer you 'Victory!' "

"*Vive la France!*" brayed Provain, carried away by his emotions. "*Vive les alliés! À Berlin!*"

"To arms!" cried Dilke, slopping whisky over a bound volume of medical journals. "To the good old British pluck!"

They drank, standing with their arms around each other's neck. Tommy the Kanaka poked a black, bewildered face around the corner and tried to figure out what all the noise was about. Having made up his mind that it would be an all-night session, he uncorked another bottle, placed it just inside the doorway and went to sleep.

"WE MUST act at once," declared Provain. "Napoleon said, 'In war victory goes to he who most resolutely attacks.' "

"To he who—to he who," Dilke repeated vaguely. He mumbled the words several times and explained with drunken gravity, "I'm 'n owl. To he who, to he who! I'm hoot owl. Look at my shirt-front 'f you don't believe me —'s bulging. I'm 'n owl all right!"

A sudden access of remorse and rage shook Provain. He hurled his glass to the floor and stamped about the room, cursing his ally.

"Man of the most contemptible!" he shouted at Dilke. "Fiend, you have led me astray. Your vile whisky, it is the drink of barbarians. I execrate it. It inflames the meninges, it destroys the control of self. One drink, and I vacillate like a ship without a *gouvernail*. I become incoherent even to myself. *Mon Dieu, mon Dieu*, but it is monstrous stuff!"

He paused and a look of exaltation kindled in his eye.

"Ah, but the wine of France, that is fit for a civilized man's palate, for his brain, for his stomach, for his—"

Dilke was so shocked by this outburst of temper that he ceased being a hoot owl and tried to be offended.

"Pardon me," he broke in, "d' I hear

you say I was a barbarian, by any chance? D'I hear you correctly?"

"Uh?" remarked Provain, held up in mid-stride.

"D'you say I was a barbarian?" repeated Dilke, jamming his bulging shirt-front into his vest and preparing for action.

"I said—"

"I heard you, and lemme say, between allies, tha's no way to speak to me. Not if you want to remain allies. D'you ever hear of Darwin, Huxley, Harvey, Newton, Wellington, Faraday, Congreve, Wilde, Johnson, Smith, Jones, Smith—" he paused to replenish his imagination and his lungs— "and you come to me and talk about barbarians. B'gone! 'N' how about cotton-goods and steel and coal—"

"Ah, but, my friend, it is from Scotland that whisky comes."

"Sssame family. My grandmother's a MacTavish, 'n' you can leave her alone. Buried in Peebles, she is. Wha's matter with you anyway? Insulting gennelman in his own home! Outrage! 'Pologize or I'll put the dogs on to you!"

"It was a slip of the tongue," Provain admitted, alarmed at the prospect of being attacked by the dogs. "My dear friend, believe me, we must not most stupidly quarrel at the outset of our great task."

"I won't 'f you won't," promised Dilke. "But don't forget Waterloo 'n' Cressy and s'm'others I forget juz now."

"I forget nothing," said Provain, silently asking Heaven to give him patience, "but let us set such matters to one side, for now we have a common foe—the Germans!"

"Eat 'em alive. Let's have a drink."

"Dilke, Dilke!" pleaded the Frenchman. "I appeal to your patriotism. Let us face the situation with inexorable calm."

"Why, I'm calm as a dead fish. Look, I can stand on one foot and close m' eyes."

He tried, and sat down upon a mound of newspapers.

"Still a bit dizzy," he smiled, "but I'm seaworthy all right."

Provain took off his sun-helmet and ran his hands through his bushy black hair.

"Oh, but I lose my sanity!" he cried in despair. "The dawn is in the sky and we have done nothing, decided nothing!"

"But wha' d'you want me to do?" tearfully protested Dilke. "I don' know wha' you expect, that's the whole trouble. We've done our share, seems to me—toasted the allies, sung the 'Marseillaise,' sung 'God Save the King' and wished 'em all luck. That's enough, isn't it?"

"It is but a prelude," snapped Provain. "Do you know who lives on the island of Eromatti? *Do you know!*"

"Old man Schlager, tha's who," Dilke answered brightly. "Good old Schlager. Haven't seen him since Christmas, when he gave that dinner."

"Schlager is a German. A Boche! He must be arrested before he has time to do any harm."

"Wha's the idea of arresting a fellow like that?" Dilke protested. "Schlager's fine fellow. One of the best. Asked me over to his place last Christmas, gave me D.T's. with his *schnapps*, and put me to bed, right in his own house. 'F you wanted to arrest Dumoulin, I'd be with you, but Schlager—"

"He is a Boche! We are at war with him, and he must not be allowed to go free on the soil of France!"

"There you go again! This ain't France—it's the New Hebrides. 'S big difference."

"It belongs to France!"

" 'N' it also belongs to England," retorted Dilke, craning his thin neck out of his wilted collar. "Dual ownership. If it's yours, it's mine. 'S foolish arrangement. 'S if you knew anything about colonies!"

"Anyhow," Provain went on desperately, "this German is a menace. We must seize him and send him to Vila to be interned. If we do not, he will come here, and burn your store, shoot you dead perhaps, devastate my plantation. Oh, I know these Boche! In 'Eighteen-seventy—"

"That doesn't sound like old Schlager," mused Dilke. "But if he's going to burn my store tha's another matter. Tha's going too far. You're sure he's going to burn my store?"

"But of course! In war it is kill or be killed. They are worse than the Kanakas, those Germans. I know them. In 'Eighteen-seventy my grandfather—"

"Well, that settles it," Dilke declared. "Old Schlager's going too far. Can't have him burning my store, can I? We must lock him up quick."

"And we shall have helped our cause by eliminating at least one dangerous enemy!" cried Provain.

BEFORE the sun was up they were out at sea in Provain's launch, heading for the island of Eromatti. The Frenchman, who did not trust his ally's singleness of purpose, had refused to wait until Dilke changed his clothes. The latter sat on the roof of the cabin, reading a Sydney paper. An automatic was thrust between his vest and his hard-boiled shirt-front.

Provain stood at the wheel, leaning forward as if trying to drive the launch faster through the water. In the bows three Kanakas lay snoring on the narrow deck. On the cabin cushions lay Provain's arsenal—a double-barreled shotgun, a single-barreled shotgun, a revolver, and a tricolor flag which was to be hoisted over Schlager's plantation as soon as the place had been captured.

"When we disembark," Provain explained, "we march straight up to the house and I shall say to this Boche—"

"Listen to this one," chuckled Dilke, slapping the paper. "There was 'n Irishman who landed at Freemantle—"

"And I shall say to this Boche, 'Surrender or die!' "

"—without a penny in his pocket and he went into a restaurant and ordered a big dinner and when—"

"If he refuses to surrender, you hear, I shall fire upon him!"

"Wha' for?" inquired Dilke.

"Oh!" groaned Provain. "Read, read your imbecile paper and be still. But, remember, I am in command when we step ashore, and if I order 'fire,' you must fire. Is that clear?"

"As mud," beamed Dilke. "Why do you say fire?"

"To kill Schlager, name of Heaven!" roared Provain. "Dilke, I implore you, become sober, become alert, become comprehensive! It is Schlager who would burn your store."

"Let's burn his house down," suggested Dilke. "Juz to teach him."

"If he will not surrender he dies, and his property will be sequestrated," Provain retorted coldly. "Even in wartime we do not burn valuable property."

Dilke winked knowingly.

"Might run over m'self and see if I couldn't run the place," he mused.

"Ah, yes?" snapped Provain, who had other ideas as to the ultimate disposal of Schlager's property.

"And so this Irishman—" went on Dilke, picking up the thread of his joke.

"I do not wish to hear about your Irishman," Provain retorted. "I am thinking of more serious matters, my friend. We are at war!"

Eromatti shoved its twin peaks above the horizon, and soon the launch slid through the pass into smooth green waters. Ahead lay a deep bay, fringed by thick forest growth. At the far end, by the muddy mouth of a river, there was a stoutly built landing stage and a shed roofed with corrugated iron.

"You see," observed Provain as the Kanakas made the launch fast to the pillars of the wharf. "These Boche! They settle down as if they were the masters. Imagine it! *Mein herr* builds great sheds and a landing stage, as if ordinary methods were not good enough for him."

"Well, why not? 'S quicker 'n' costs less in the long run."

"But where does the money come from?" inquired Provain, answering his question with the same breath, "He is subsidized, I feel sure. But let us not argue. Come!"

"I wish somebody'd subsidize me," commented Dilke.

"A gun!" ordered Provain, handing him one. "Take it—and remember!"

"Is it loaded?"

"*Oui, oui, oui!* But, naturally. It is to war that we go."

"Ah, we, we, we," agreed Dilke. "But naturally!"

He began to laugh and hastily apologized when he saw the look of intense suspicion on Provain's face.

"I'm almost sober," he pointed out. "Could we have one nip before we start. A bracer, eh what? Steady our gallant nerves; mine are jumpy as the very deuce this morning."

One glance at Dilke's shaking hands convinced Provain that the best thing to do was to humor him. The man was in no fit condition to play his part. He fished a bottle of cognac out of a locker and shuddered when Dilke put it to his lips and drank a third of it as if it were water.

"Gaudy stuff!" smiled the Englishman, putting the bottle into his pocket. "Full of steam." He shook himself like a dog shaking water off its coat, and smacked his lips. "Forward!" he cried. "Onward, Ker-ristian sohoholdiers—"

"Silence!" roared Provain. "*Du calme!* We must surprize the enemy!"

A Kanaka laborer came out of the godown to see who was causing the disturbance. He saluted smartly as the two white men marched by side by side.

"He has taught them the military salute," Provain ejaculated. "No doubt but they are all armed and trained. Perhaps, who knows? It is to our death that we go. Be brave, Dilke! Courage!"

They followed a broad path bordered with tall trees, running back to a two-story house, painted white with green shutters, standing in the shade of a clump of mango trees. In a field close to the road lean cows were trying to become acclimatized.

" 'S nice place," murmured Dilke.

"And if he will not surrender," said Provain, "shoot!"

They reached the house. Their intended victim sat on the veranda, making entries in a ledger which he held on his knees. He looked up at them over gold-rimmed spectacles, and a slight frown appeared between his eyes.

"Schlager—" began Provain in a voice which shook with emotion.

"One moment," the German said curtly. "I am balancing my accounts, please."

He was a large, fleshy man, with a large, fleshy red face. His manners were distinctly abrupt. Apparently he resented this intrusion.

"Your accounts can wait," declared Provain. "Schlager you are a prisoner. At the first hostile gesticulation I shall shoot!"

Schlager carefully placed a sheet of blotting paper between the pages of the ledger, and closed the book with a snap which jarred Dilke's sensitive nerves.

"I do not wish to skylark," he declared. "Today I am busy. Provain, put down that gun, please. It might be loaded."

"It is loaded, I will inform you," the Frenchman retorted. "And it is to shoot at you that I aim it."

"Tha's righ'," agreed Dilke, favoring Schlager with a ghastly smile. "You're a goo' fellow, but you can't come and burn my store down. Tha's going too far. You're a prisoner."

"Ha-ha," remarked Schlager, trying to appease these two madmen. "It is very funny. I laugh. Now you must go away and let me work. Today I am busy." Despite his good resolution his voice became sharp. "If you do not go away," he added, "I will have my boys take you away."

"I am not here to amuse myself, do not believe it," snapped Provain. "It is duty of the sternest—"

"Put down that gun!"

"Never! Duty compels—"

"Once more, put down that gun!"

"And I order you to surr—"

Schlager's red face became purple. The veins on his neck stood out in knotted ropes.

"Loafing ruffians," he brayed. "I do not keep open house. No! I am not a wayside hotel. No! I am not a drunken sailor nor a beachcomber. No! Do you think you can walk in here whenever you wish for a cheap drink? You are mistaken. No more do I wish for your society. I order you to go away, at once!"

During this speech he banged the ledger with the palm of his hand and glared at the two offenders.

"'Snot our fault," protested Dilke, with tears in his eyes. "Mustn't get mad, old bean. Not at us. Here—" he dragged the bottle from his pocket and held it out — "have a li'l drink. Juz to show there's no ill feeling."

"Dirty beast!" retorted the German. "Vile beast! Drink-besodden Englishman, I do not drink with you—nor with you either, Provain. You, I thought you a sober man. But it is not so! It is the tropics which demoralize such decadent races as yours. Only Germans are true colonists. I work while you drink. Yes, that is so!"

"You accuse me of drunkenness when I am in the performance of my duty!" cried Provain. "Oh, but it is difficult to restrain my finger upon this trigger. Schlager, you—"

"Wha's that you said about colonists?" inquired Dilke, trying to appear angry. "Lemme tell you about the British Empire—"

"Dilke, *nom de Dieu*, be still!" begged Provain, whose arms were growing weary of holding up the shotgun. "How can I tell this Boche—"

"Boche!" roared Schlager. "Now it is insults because I will not give you free drinks. It is threats to my life that you make. I will have you up before the court at Vila. My boys will throw you out!"

But he did not call his houseboys because he was not sure whether or not that gun was going to go off. The French were an excitable race. It would be wise, he decided, to get that gun out of the way before he summoned help.

"The only court you will see," declared Provain, "is a court martial. Schlager, fool, listen: War has been declared—war between your country and mine! We are going to avenge 'Eighteen-seventy; we shall not rest till again Alsace and Lorraine are French!"

"I'm 'n ally," added Dilke, preening himself. "When the British lion starts to roar—watch out!"

Schlager's body stiffened; his eyes opened wide; his hands closed convulsively on the ledger.

"What is this?" he inquired sharply. "War! Has France declared war on Germany?"

"France is a peaceful country," sneered Provain. "A civilized country. No, it is not France which has sought this war—it is Germany, the jealous, the saber-rattling Germany!"

"But this talk of revenge, of Alsace and Lorraine—"

"Not revenge—punishment!" thundered Provain. "Whoever attacks France, pays! The rose has thorns of steel!"

An unpleasant smile appeared on the German's face. He looked up at Dilke and asked—

"And you—what are you?"

"I'm 'n ally," repeated Dilke.

This seemed all sufficient. He leaned against the veranda railing and renewed his courage with the dregs of the cognac bottle. He was careful to put the empty bottle down beneath the table, standing it in an upright position.

"'Shot day, isn't it?" he remarked, trying to relieve the nervous tension which filled the air. "Stuffy, you might say."

Provain and Schlager favored him with a glance of contempt, which made him blush. Provain said quietly, as if to mark the contrast between his dignity and Dilke's lack of self-respect:

"I hope you will surrender without making the grand commotion. I do not wish to shoot, but I will do my entire duty."

Schlager said nothing. He bit his lips and stared past Provain as if he were seeing ghosts.

"Wha' d' you look at me like that for?" protested Dilke. "It's a hot day and you know it. I'm 'n ally, 'n' I can say what I like, 'n' you can't stop me.

Did I wanna come on this fool trip? Not I!" He appealed to the German. "I was soun' 'sleep at two in the morning, and Provain comes in and he says, 'War's been declared. We're allies.' And then he throws Napoleon at me. 'S disgusting."

Provain turned toward him angrily.

"Imbecile," he snapped. "I order you to be still. It is I who am in command!"

While his head was averted Schlager suddenly came into action. He raised the ledger above his head and hurled it at Provain. It coincided with the pit of the Frenchman's stomach. He staggered back into Dilke's arms, but he did not loose his presence of mind. He fired in the general direction of his enemy, just too late, however, for the latter had leaped through an open window into the house. He could be heard bellowing at his staff. The sound of his voice had an unpleasant ring about it. It seemed quite evident that he did not intend to surrender.

"I'm going," announced Dilke. "He's mad."

"All your fault!" wailed Provain. He stepped up to the window and emptied the second barrel of his shot-gun into the room. "To keep them quiet," he explained. "They—"

A scowling black face appeared around the corner, and a black arm heaved a machete at the Frenchman. It missed by inches.

"I'm going," repeated Dilke.

It seemed to be the wisest thing to do. They ran down the veranda steps and crashed through a hedge of crotons, From the first-floor balcony a shot rang out. A bullet tore through the leaves and kicked up a spurt of dust at Dilke's feet. They ran on, zigzagging across a field where two cows stood gazing at them with luminous eyes. Fearing, no doubt, to hurt his cattle, Schlager held his fire.

A confused noise of shouting came from the house. Glancing over his shoulder, Provain saw Schlager's tall white form leading a dozen or more Kanakas. Provain swore bitterly. Instead of scoring a decisive victory he was being chased across the landscape like a rabbit. Dilke had thrown away his shotgun and was running in great bounds. His mouth was wide open, his eyes fixed and glassy.

A rifle cracked; the bullet whined by close overhead. Dilke's speed increased. Provain lumbered along close behind him.

They reached the fringe of the plantation and fell into uncut jungle. They tore at it, forcing their way in among the rank undergrowth. Soon they were floundering knee-deep in brown ooze, clinging to creepers and roots that were greasy with mud.

When at last they stopped there was neither sign nor sound of their pursuers.

"*Mon Dieu, mon Dieu,*" raged Provain, "but it is running away that we are! Running away! *Mon Dieu,* what shamefulness!"

"You—you're quite right," panted Dilke, "and I can't get away fast enough to suit me."

"But we shall go back!" Provain asserted. "We shall not let this snake strike at us when we are off our guard. You see now how perfidious these Germans are: He waits until my head is turned and then assails me. O Dilke, my friend, let us be calm! Let us think! Let us cease this running away!"

"If I thought I could swim all the way to Kalewara," gurgled Dilke, pressing one hand to his heart and the other to his forehead, "I'd be on my way, and nothing could stop me—nothing. I'm a peace-loving drunk," he added, "and the trouble is, I'm sobering up fast."

Provain laid an encouraging hand on Dilke's shoulder.

"My good friend," he adjured. "Do not lose faith. With sobriety will come strength. Not yourself alone do you represent, but England! We fight for a grand civilization; if we fail—"

"You can keep your grand civilization," Dilke said feelingly. "You can have it. So far's I'm concerned the war's over. I'm going to surrender and see if old man Schlager won't bring out some of that *schnapps* to celebrate his victory. Provain, old bean, I'm feeling low."

"Pig of an Englishman!" swore Provain, pushing the turn-coat away from him. "Stay here, then, and rot! I shall deal alone with this Boche."

The turn-coat staggered back against a tree-trunk, tripped against a projecting root and went over backward. He sat down with a soft plop.

"Now listen," he appealed as soon as he recovered his breath. "Now, old top, listen. Be fair. You can't leave me out here all alone. It's growing late and it'll soon be dark and I'm not feeling at all well. I'm terribly weak—" he gulped back tears of self-pity—"you don't know how weak I am. It's the liquor. I'm all shot to pieces, that's what I am."

"Come with me then," snapped Provain, the strong man. "I will not abandon you. No! But I make one condition: You must be courageous. Remember, Dilke, this is war!"

"Uhuh," agreed Dilke. "War's right. But land fighting's not my style. You get me back on board that launch and I swear I'll join the navy and never touch another drop in my life."

"You will join the navy!" cried Provain, enheartened by this show of patriotism. "Dilke, my friend, you rise in my regards. This is very fine!"

IT WAS growing dusk. The shadows thickened beneath the trees and the mosquitoes came out in full force. By the time they reached firm land, darkness had closed in.

"The house of the Boche is in darkness," whispered Provain. "Let us be wary. No doubt but he lies in wait for us. Let us creep up upon him with care."

Dilke, who had been grumbling to himself for some time, suddenly stopped and inquired testily—

"Do you see it too?"

"Do I see what?" snapped Provain.

"Oh, hell!" moaned Dilke. "I've got 'em again."

"Got what again?"

"D.T's. I'm seeing things. It's a sort of purplish land crab this time. You see what happens when I'm cut off from my daily ration. Darn it, I know it's not there, but it's so confoundedly real!"

"A purplish land crab!" repeated Provain, who was not used to the ways of inebriates. "In the utter darkness! But you are mad!"

"So-so." Dilke's voice was shaky. "One land crab—*two* land crabs!" He leaped sidewise violently and came down on Provain's toes. "I'm awfully sorry," he stammered excitedly, "but—but there's a large animal, a large yellow brute, trying to get at me. I saw it distinctly!"

"But no!" declared Provain. "There is nothing."

"But yes, there is!" Dilke cried wildly. "It's trying to get at me, I tell you."

The hallucination charged at him again. He yelled and went galloping away through the darkness, plunging straight ahead of him.

Provain shook his head sadly. It was terrible to think that one had such allies—a drink-crazed people who saw purplish land crabs in the night.

"Alone," he told himself, "alone I shall finish this, or die!"

And he meant it. He slid along through the rank grass with the stealth of a rather heavy-footed elephant.

Meanwhile Dilke, terrorized by his yellow brute, charged across field and ditch, yelling for help. He fled past Schlager's house, and the Kanakas, mistaking him for a spirit of evil, went away without waiting to investigate.

The Melanesian is too well acquainted with the many gods and ghosts who walk abroad on moonless nights to take any risks with apparitions, which scream like souls in torment and rush about in search of human victims. Those Kanakas gave Dilke a wide, wide berth.

Terror-stricken, he shot down the lane leading toward the landing-stage. Whenever he looked back, there was the slavering yellow brute close at his heels.

Dimly he heard a voice shouting at him, but he was past caring about mere human voices. A lick of red flame bloomed in the darkness. There was a thunderous explosion; a hot breath of air blew past his face. All this was part of his nightmare. He raced on—and catapulted into a shadowy figure which barred his way. He went into it head-foremost and the force of the impact almost broke his neck.

Then he was down, sprawling on top of a man who squirmed and cursed and tried to shake him off. He struck back blindly, immensely relieved because, beneath him, there was a creature of flesh and blood, and the shadowy yellow brute had vanished.

For a while blows rained against his face, and a pair of bony hands groped for a hold on his throat. But his energy was tremendous. He knelt on his antagonist's chest and pounded him into submission. Gradually the man's efforts relaxed. He squirmed a little, groaned and lay still.

A great surge of joy swept Dilke. One of his eyes was closed, his mouth was torn open, two of his teeth were missing, but these were minor accidents. He had laid his ghost and, what was still better, he had captured Schlager single-handed.

"Provain," he yelled when his breath returned, "Provain! I've got him."

After a time the Frenchman appeared, treading cautiously, for he feared a trap.

"Come on," urged Dilke. "Nothing to be afraid of, old top. I'm sitting on his chest. Yo-ho-ho and a bottle of *schnapps!* Strike a light and see who's here! Jolly old Schlager brought down in open combat. Alone I did it!"

"*Mon Dieu!*" gasped Provain, groping about in the darkness. "Is it possible!"

"I'm sitting on him, I tell you. Not a peep out of him for the last two minutes. It takes a Briton to finish a job, old top; be it said without offense— He's squirming. Take a look quick."

While Provain was fumbling through his pockets a voice came from beneath Dilke. It said shakily:

"Dilke, you drunken swine, get up. I'll teach you to interfere with an officer in the execution of his duty. I'm Ormrod."

Dilke staggered to his feet and Provain cried—

"*Mon Dieu!*"

He struck a match, and together, with horrified eyes, they peered at the victim. Despite the blood on his face there was no mistaking him. It wasn't Schlager, at all, but Ormrod, the police commissioner.

He sat up, cleared his throat and barked:

"What's the meaning of this outrage? I landed an hour ago and arrested Schlager. He's on board the cutter this minute. We're at war with Germany—"

"We know that," broke in Provain. "Sir, we were here to arrest him ourselves."

"You leave all the arresting to me," snarled Ormrod. "You're not fit to be loose, either of you. What were you up to anyway?"

They tried to explain and he grunted disgustedly.

"I'll let you off with a caution, because you're not worth arresting. But don't forget I could have you both up for trespass and assault. Y'understand? Trespass and assault! Now get out of my sight, both of you—you make me sick!"

They stood side by side, listening to the retreating footsteps, and at last Provain exclaimed:

"And that is all the thanks one gets for one's devotion. One is a trespasser and an assaulter. It is odious! Odious!"

"Yes," agreed Dilke. "Just you come again at two in the morning and tell me there's a war on, and you'll never know what hit you. My word, I'm thirsty!"

# The Night-Nurse

BY

LEONARD H. NASON

THE night-nurse was one of the best. She was past the years of youth, and no one, looking at her, would think she was such a good sport. I didn't like her for a nickel when I first knew her, because she was always waking me up in the night to give me a shot of Dakin solution. The Dakin treatment for gunshot wounds consists of shooting a mysterious solution into the wound every two hours. This is done with a syringe inserted into a rubber hose which remains in the wound all the time. A man with a large wound will have several of these tubes dangling, like an ornamental fringe.

I had a hole in my abdomen seven inches long, with three tubes in it. The solution can not be warmed, as heat destroys its efficiency, so it was used at room temperature, which in the November nights was around freezing. It will be seen that my feelings toward any one who dragged me from sleep every two hours all winter and filled my stomach full of that icy stuff would be anything but loving. Boy! Every time I got a shot of that stuff I thought some one had run a bayonet through me.

There was a man in the ward with sixteen tubes in his leg. The propeller of a plane had hit him. I pitied that lad.

Well, after a time they took the hose out of me, and I didn't swear at the night-nurse any more. They put her on day duty then, anyway. She used to come in the ward after supper to swipe a little hot water off the stove—we had a tiny stove that furnished heat for a sixty-bed ward and hot water for the dish-washing and dressings—and she'd stop and chew the rag with me for a minute.

"I've come in to give my man a drink," she used to say, displaying a metal hot-water bag.

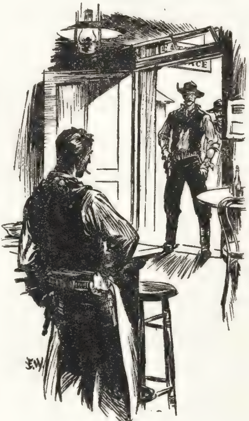
One night I was full of gloom, and she sneaked back to her quarters and got me some port wine. I kept the whole ward awake that night. After that she used to bring me in a toothful of nose-paint every time she came. If they'd ever caught her she'd have got the works. One of the other nurses asked her how come her partiality for me.

"Ah!" replied the night-nurse, "when he was sick he used to swear at me just as if he were my husband. I never had a man swear at me all my life. You can't imagine the thrill it gives."

I wish I could meet that nurse again. There's several nurses I'd like to meet. I wish they were men. One of us would be a corpse. But I would like to see the night-nurse. Chances are small, I guess. I don't even know her name.

## *The return of a prodigal brother*

# The Time to Go



THE SUCCESSIVE terminal towns of the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fé were so many lurid explosions. Each marked a pause in the crawling progress of the road across Kansas. In each sprang up saloons, gambling-places and dance-halls; and the last mushroom civic growth, making the head of the road for a brief time, took over from its predecessor the honor of being the "bloodiest town on the map."

Some of these railroad settlements were dilatory in living up to the required reputation, so that there was room for argument as to which was the liveliest and worst. But in all truth, Newton, Harvey County, in 1871, fulfilled all expectations. Not only was it the head of the railroad but also the new terminus of the Texas cattle trail. One Texan quaintly expressed it—

"This burg can give hell a two minute handicap an' win in a walk."

Perhaps this was an exaggeration, yet the speaker was not Kansas-born and was impartial in his judgment. Regardless of individual merits of the various termini, it was unanimously conceded that no railway extension ever was characterized by more lawlessness than in that of the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fé.

Among those who had kept up with the road were Joe Laws and his pretty wife—and their portable eating-house. Almost from the start, his wife, Mary, abhorred the life. When she urged him to go into some business back east he would point to the day's profits and would insist they would be foolish to abandon a small fortune.

At Newton, however, Joe found himself feeling uneasy. The town was overrun by gamblers and "sure thing" men. Nearly all the men were proud of their shooting ability. He began to wonder if his wife were not far too pretty to take into such a hodgepodge of recklessness. Until he opened his restaurant in Newton, Joe believed himself capable of defending his own. Then came the wild cattlemen with the first of the forty thousand head that they were to drive up from Texas during the short season. They quickly wove a new viciousness into the red warp and

## By HUGH PENDEXTER

woof of the town. As gunmen, they quickly collided with Kansas desperadoes, and the shootings occurred in the street as well as in the resorts. Famous guntoters were being killed almost daily. Joe realized that the six-shooter was the only law. He suggested to his wife that she go back East.

"I won't go unless you go," she stubbornly told him. She was a Banner, and all the Banners usually meant what they said.

He thought of the fat receipts for the day and temporized:

"Probably we've seen the worst of it. As soon as the rails get a little closer to the next town, this place will quiet down. They've already named it, Larned."

"And when the rush is made for Larned—you'll be keen to go there?" she asked.

"I don't think so. Mebbe I'll call this our last move. But we're a lot rougher here than in any of the other places. A woman was killed in the street by a wild bullet from Tim Shea's dance-hall. She was a dance-hall girl, but it might have been you, Mary. I do wish you'd go back."

"No," she quietly told him, "it's no worse for you to worry about me than for me to worry about you."

"Well, we'll wait a few days and see if it don't quiet down. But you mustn't go out unless I'm with you."

"I never go out except to run into Stillwell's store next door."

"Darned hard on you, being cooped up here and keeping house in that back room. Mebbe we won't wait till the rush to Larned comes. But I'll never get another chance to get big money quick."

The girl's life was virtual imprisonment. The eating-house did a lively business late into the evening. She seldom entered the dining-room except in the early morning hours. Their living-room was at the back of the house, and all the partitions were thin. She grew to hate the room, but the outside world was worse. The loud talk of drunken desperadoes caused her face to burn, and often she lay on the bed with a pillow muffling her ears. She kept that part of her misery from Joe, fearing lest he act the censor. Did he do that, she was convinced, he would be sentencing himself to a bloody death.

ONE NIGHT a tall, rangy herder, with butternut pants tucked into long boots, with two guns in his belt and with his Mexican hat pushed back from his forehead, grossly insulted Joe. The man's companions, some of whom had ridden with Quantrell, laughed uproariously. Joe ate crow. To save his self-respect he could have made a defiant gesture and died at the muzzle of a smoking gun. But there was his wife.

After the reckless group departed he went to the back room and broke down and wept. His wife comforted him, or attempted to, and insisted that words could not hurt him.

"But they do! They did! They hurt like—" he groaned. "Oh, if you only was back in Burlingame! If I could only handle guns like Hanse!"

She grew deadly pale and her eyes widened with the old misery. Instantly he was contrite and almost forgetful of his wounded pride.

"There, there, dear, never went to hurt the girl. But your brother would be a humdinger in a place like this. That tall devil never would 'a' called him that."

"And what has Hanse's wildness fetched him?" she whispered. "Where is he tonight? What will be the end of his wickedness? Oh, Joe, if he'd only died when a little boy. To think he's scarcely more than a boy this night."

Joe attempted a defense of the brother-in-law, whom he had never seen, but whose lawless acts comprised two years of wild history on a wild border. All Joe could say was:

"Hanse Banner can take care of himself. He could protect a wife if he had one."

"Take care of himself," she bitterly cried. "Scarcely out of his teens and in hiding most of the time."

"He'd never stand for what I had to stand for tonight," bitterly insisted Joe.

She almost told him what she had "stood for" when compelled to overhear the rough talk on the other side of the thin partition. Instead, in a flare of passionate protest, she shrilly insisted:

"Take me away! Take me back East! Now! Leave everything!"

Believing she was concerned on his account, he quieted his own rage and more philosophically reasoned:

"Still, I'm alive. I stood for the abuse. I won't care what the rotten scum say. I wear no guns. The Texan knew it, and he had two. So, he's the coward. That particular bunch will be pulling out soon. Some will remain here, planted. This town's going to quiet down. We won't follow the road any farther. I'll get a good offer and sell and go back East."

The next few days brought no trouble to the eating-house. The Texans had been running the town for several days, and now the Kansas gunmen were planning to assert their supremacy. Each faction was sniffing the impending battle; each was planning to take the other at a disadvantage.

As Joe listened to the gossip at his tables, his hopes were high. The ideal consummation would be for both factions to be exterminated. He hoped the tall, rangy man would not patronize him again. He often pictured himself picking up the gun behind the counter and shooting him; only, the picture persisted in his going down before a volley from the man's companions.

As he stood behind the counter, dishing up for the Mexican waiter, he was always seeing the man with the low-crowned hat of enormous brim pushed back and revealing the lighter complexion of the forehead. The man's weathered face reminded him of a dark red mask. But what was hurting his pride tremendously was his hesitancy to go out on the street. It was shameful—but there was Mary.

WHEN it was predicted that the showdown between Kansans and Texans was imminent, the latter ceased their night revels and returned to their camp. Hearing this, Joe ventured forth late in the afternoon, or early evening, and endeavored to make himself believe he was free to come and go. Then came a day when he entered his restaurant and was horribly shocked to behold his wife standing on the threshold of their living room, her gaze that of a mad person. In her hand, held gingerly, as if there were blood on the handle, was one of the revolvers.

With a low cry, he ran to her, and for a moment she stared at him as if she did not recognize him. Then she pointed to the floor. His eyes were almost as wild as hers as he beheld—a dark stain.

"My God!" he gasped.

"He came to this door," she shrilly said. "He tried to enter. I shot him."

"You've killed some one?" he whispered.

She slowly shook her head and backed into the living-room. He followed her and closed the door. She cautiously placed the revolver on a stand and held her hand before her face, the fingers stiffly spread apart.

He seized her by the shoulders, shook her roughly and hoarsely demanded: "Who? Who? Who?"

She went to the wash-stand and poured water over her hands, although they were unstained, and scrubbed them desperately. He stared and waited. She told him—

"The tall Texan."

He leaned against the thin partition and stared at the opposite wall. He noticed several old bullet-holes. He observed that the boards were beginning to warp. And, all the while, he was telling himself that he must get a horse and ride out to the Texans' camp and do his best to kill the man. Of course he never would come back. But it was one of those times when a man must go, when the question of returning was of little matter. With a little shiver, which he tried to disguise by shrugging his shoulders, he took the towel from her and gently dried the slim hands. His voice was quiet, almost casual, as he asked—

"Where did you hit him?"

"His left hand. He stayed—to wrap it up. He said he would come back."

He was frightened by her voice, by her set expression. He fiercely commanded:

"Mary, you kick out of this spell. You stop it! He won't bother you again; he won't come back."

"He said he'd come," she monotonously repeated," said he'd pay me off by getting you. Then he'd take me away."

She was clapping her hands over her mouth to stifle a scream. She would have fallen had he not caught her in his arms. He placed her on the bed and said:

"I'll hunt up a doctor. There's one who hangs out in Shea's place."

"No, no. Don't leave!"

"Mary, I must get a doctor unless you stop this. You've been frightened. You've scared a cheap rascal away. You haven't been hurt—just frightened."

"Promise me you'll start back East tonight," she whispered.

"That means I must give my business away."

"You can sell. Stillwell would like to buy you out. But give it away—anything, only get me out of this."

"All right, you win. Get your nerve back. I'll make a trade with Stillwell if I can. If I can't, I'll leave it. We've made quite a bit of money. We'll call it quits. There's no chance of that man coming here again today. If you'll say you're all right, I'll go and fix it."

She eagerly assured him:

"I'm myself. I'm all right. The happiest moment of my life since we started with the railroad will be when we're traveling back home. See, my hand is steady. The fear's left me. Go now. Give, or sell; then hurry back."

"It'll take a bit of time," he gently warned her. "I must act as if I wasn't over-keen, you know. We have plenty of time. No one will bother you while I'm gone."

"Dear, I've been weak and foolish. Now I'm all right. You stop worrying. Now, go. I'll be calm."

He held her at arm's length, and she believed he was doubting her ability to keep up. He stared long and earnestly, then kissed her good-by and wheeled about. Stepping behind the counter, he watched the closed door; picked up his Colt revolver and thrust it under his coat.

Gaining the rough street he walked rapidly by Stillwell's store and made for a small corral back of the hotel, where he knew he could secure a horse. And all the time the thought was parading through his mind:

"You must go, even if you can't come back. You can't come back, but it's time for you to go."

Like one in a trance he heard himself calmly dickering for the hire of a horse and insisting on leaving the worth of the animal. Like a voice coming from a great distance he heard the man expostulating:

"But, doggone! You ain't goin' to steal this nag, Laws. Well, well, if that's your notion I'll hold the money till you come back."

LAWS found himself in the saddle, riding from town and keeping wide of the construction crew. He had no plan; he felt no fear. He was embarked on the inevitable. He felt cold; he felt calm. His thoughts were projected ahead, to the camp of the cowboys. He had lost all sense of self and was impersonal. And ever the refrain—

"You can't return, but you must go."

His perceptive faculties were dulled, for he was hardly conscious of the graders, shouting profanely to their work-animals. Then he beheld a man clinging to his horse's bridle and heard an incisive voice crying—

"Are you deef 'n' dumb?"

He blinked at the man standing at the head of his horse and quietly asked:

"See here! What do you mean by stopping me like this?"

"I'm buying your nag, stranger. Hop down and be smart."

He stared at the man—about his own age, slim of build and wearing two ivory-handled guns. It came into his mind that he had met the fellow somewhere. But there was the business ahead, and he was not curious.

"You mean you're going to take my horse?"

"I need the critter more'n you do, stranger. Name your price. I'll fork over. I'm no hoss-thief. And a hand dropped on an ivory handle, while the other fished among gold pieces. "I'm mighty hard pressed."

Laws felt no resentment against the fellow. All his hatred was concentrated on the tall Texan. He said:

"I refuse to sell. You can't take my horse by force."

"Sure's you're a foot high, I'm goin' to take your hoss."

"There's a time to go, even if you can't come back," muttered Laws and he lifted his gaze to stare toward the smoke which marked the Texan's camp.

"Hi! What's that? Time to go? You hit it square on the nail. That's why I'm goin' on your hoss, stranger." The fellow laughed recklessly, but with a glint of humor in his dark eyes.

Laws puckered his brows. There was no need of mad haste in reaching the camp. The lean brown hand on the big revolver could draw and shoot him from the saddle before he could reach for his own gun. He had no desire to shoot the young man. There was only one crime in the world—the affront to his wife. He patiently said—

"If you'll follow me a quarter of a mile—and I'll ride slow—I'll give you this horse."

"Er-huh? Just as easy as that. What's the rest of your game?" dryly asked the man.

"I'm on my way to the camp of some Texan herders. I'm going to find and kill one of them. He insulted Mary. Mary's my wife."

The hold-up man stared blankly for a bit. "Going alone and carrying a fight to a parcel of bad Texans?" he curiously asked.

"Yes."

"Then you must be some rare hellion. I must know you by the speech of people. What's your handle?"

"Laws. Joe Laws."

"Oh! Laws. So it's Laws, eh," mumbled the man. "How long you been out here, Mr. Laws?"

"Came along with the road. Run an eating-house. Tall herder talked bad to me t'other evening. Because of my wife I stood for it. He came this afternoon while I was out and insulted my wife. She shot him through the left hand. I found her nearly crazy."

The man gaped for a moment and murmured—

"Your wife, Mary—Mary Laws potted the bad man?"

"Yes. Don't repeat things after me, please. I promised my wife I'd go back East with her this very day. She thinks I'm out now, selling my place. Of course she couldn't understand it was a time when a man has to do a certain thing. I didn't try to explain it. But you see how it is. That's what I meant by saying it's time I must go, even if there ain't any arrangements made for my coming back. I'm bothering to make this plain to you, so you will understand that I can't give up my horse. I must ride into that camp, hell-for-leather, and get my man before I'm riddled by his friends."

"I see. I see. 'Fighting' Joe Laws."

"No, no," disclaimed Laws seriously. "I've never claimed to be a fighter. Run an eating-house. I'm doing something now I simply have to do, even if it isn't in my line."

The man nodded gravely and, still holding the bridle, turned and glanced toward the west.

"Yeah, I can see the smoke from their cooking-fires." Facing about, he said, "I'm proud to meet such a conscientious cuss as you be, Fighting Joe Laws. But drag your eyes to the south a trifle. Those hossmen are Texans."

Laws shifted his gaze and beheld a

compact group of riders heading for Newton. They had left the camp while he was talking with the stranger. He shaded his eyes and studied the man in the lead. There was no mistaking the tall, gaunt figure.

"Damn! You've held me here and they've started back to the town. They're making for my place. The man ahead is the one I'm after. Stand clear, or—"

He did not finish the threat. With incredible quickness the man yanked him from the saddle and darted a hand inside his coat and plucked forth the revolver and hurled it far to one side. Then he was on the horse and galloping on a long diagonal to reach the town ahead of the Texans. He rode well, as if part of his mount. And, as he rode, he recklessly shouted:

"A time to go! Well, let's hope the goin's good, with lots of company."

The Texans were in no haste and gave no heed to the horseman passing by on their left, who, in turn gave them no attention. He entered the town and hitched his mount in front of the nearest store. Of the storekeeper he inquired the location of Law's place. Securing the information, he took to the middle of the road and sauntered leisurely toward the restaurant. Coming to Stillwell's store he surveyed the interior through a window and then stepped inside. When the proprietor came forward he curtly explained:

"Sent by Joe Laws. Some Texans are coming to bedevil his wife, Mary. He wants you to hide her in your store till they can be coaxed away. They'll be here soon. Fetch her in the back way."

With a startled exclamation Stillwell ran through the store and out of the back door. The young man lounged to the corner of the building and cautiously peered between it and the eating-house. Soon he saw the storekeeper and a young woman crossing his narrow range of vision. He glanced down the street. None of the Texans were in sight.

"Prob'ly stoppin' for a snort of strong water," he mumbled.

He bent low, ran between the buildings and entered the back door of the eating-house. The Mexican waiter was just leaving and jabbered something excitedly before starting to place the greatest distance between himself and the restaurant in the shortest space of time.

Whistling softly, the young man entered the dining-room and secured an apron from the counter and tied it over his guns. Then he ventured to open the door of the living-room and for a few moments surveyed it. Returning to the main room he stepped behind the counter and thrust his hands under his apron and drew two guns; and, with the weapons thus concealed, he leaned carelessly against the counter and waited.

Five of the Texans had left their horses and were coming up the street. The leader had a bandage around his left hand. Some distance behind them, and walking with a staggering, drunken gait, came Joe Laws. He was nearly exhausted by his long run. Overhauling Laws was a gaunt, sunburned man, who was finishing his third horse and a sixty-mile ride from the Kansas and Pacific line.

"THERE'S a time to go, no matter if you don't come back," murmured the man behind the counter. His hands were under the apron. "Who'd thought of him havin' guts enough to believe that?"

He was in a negligent pose when the door flew violently open and the tall Texan stepped in with four men at his heels. He gave a single glance at the man behind the counter, undoubtedly taking him to be a waiter.

"I'll fetch her out. Hold the young fellow if he shows up," he told his comrades.

He was striding the length of the room to gain the living-room at the back of the house.

"Just where you 'low you're headin' for, stranger?" drawled the man behind the counter.

The tall man gave no heed to the question, but a bow-legged herder ambled forward. There came a metallic *click-click.* The tall man twisted about and was infuriated at the waiter's show of resistance. One hand had come from under the apron and was holding a forty-five. With a roar of rage the Texan reached for his gun and barely touched the handle before the booming crash of the forty-five was echoed by the crash of the tall figure striking the floor.

Another echo was the bow-legged man's gun. The waiter jerked about as if struck a heavy blow and shot the bow-legged man through the heart. The man was dead before he collapsed to his knees, his hands scraping the edge of the counter. The second gun came into view, and the two guns began answering and silencing the spurts of flame at the sides and the front of the room, as the waiter, leaning against the counter, fired rapidly and with deadly precision.

The horseman and young Laws came through the smoky doorway, as the survivor of the terrible tragedy sagged half across the counter. He made a futile effort to cock the left hand gun; then he grinned faintly and greeted—

"Howdy, Sheriff."

Laws stared wildly at the slaughter-house. The sheriff ran behind the counter and wrenched the two guns from the feebly resisting hands.

"Hanse Banner, you've cheated me! You're dying!" he cried.

The sheriff caught him and eased him to the floor.

"Hanse Banner? Mary's brother?" gasped Laws as he ran behind the counter, uncertain what to do.

"No-good brother," mumbled Banner.

"He robbed the Kansas-Pacific single-handed," said the sheriff.

"Oh, my God! Here comes Mary—my wife, his sister," groaned Laws.

Banner made a supreme effort.

"I'm dying," he told the sheriff. "You've got the loot I dropped. Have pity for my sister."

Mary Laws came through the doorway and opened her mouth to shriek; then she discovered her husband.

"Your brother Hanse took the fight away from me," he told her, and he led her around the counter.

She gave a little cry as she beheld Hanse. Then she was on her knees and lifting his head to her lap—

"My little brother, my little brother," she moaned as she bent over him.

His mouth twisted in a little smile, as he recognized his sister.

"Just dropped in behind some skunks. Reckoned I'd help you folks out, after hearing what they come for. Glad to help a bit. But you was always right, Mary— L'arn 'em to 'sult my sister— There's a time to go—" And he was gone, with the whimsical, twisted smile deceiving them for a few moments.

Leaving the girl with her dead, Laws took the sheriff aside and whispered rapidly. The officer listened with no expression on his craggy face. He could have informed Laws that his brother-in-law, dead or alive, was worth five thousand dollars to the Kansas-Pacific. When Laws had finished, the sheriff returned to the girl and, awkwardly twiddling his big hat in his fingers, he told her:

"Your brother, ma'am, had fighting-guts. He was a brave man. Trifle careless'n reckless, but nothing to hurt. A straight-shootin', brave man. We thought a heap of him up on the Kansas an' Pacific, ma'am. The boys will be sorry he pegged out this way."

"He was a good brother," she sobbed. "He sent the storekeeper to hide me. Then he came in here, waited, and fought them all alone."

"Nerviest damn play I ever see, ma'am," mumbled the sheriff. "He was a dead-game, wholesome lad. The boys up on the Kansas an' Pacific line will sure miss him."

He motioned for Laws to follow him, as he backed to the front door. And he whispered:

"I've got to rustle round right smart an' tear down the reward-notices I put up. If you take her back East at once she'll never know how that young hellion has pestered me."

# Rodeo

## BY W. C. TUTTLE

FIRST steer ri-i-ider, Joe Camnetti! Joe—nossir, he's one of the local Jewish boys. Ho-o-old fast! Whap! No, he don't qualify, except as a high-diver. Look at the cowboy with the pretty shirt! That's all it takes to make a cowboy these days—gaudy shirts.

"Buck Brady! Look at that Swede ride! No, he didn't fall off; he tried to save his hat. Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha! No, he'll be all right. Rudder twisted a little, tha'sall. Makes him go sideways. The next ri-i-i-ider is Jimmy Gomez, the German mark. A black steer from Oregon! Qualify? What do yuh want him to do? You try it, brother.

"Yes, ma'am—plenty dust. Relay race? Not today. No, ma'am. All steer and bronc ridin' today. Next ri-i-i-ider is Sam Pope. Not any relation, ma'am. This'n's got a vacuum. Best rider of the two, though. Bo-o-o-oy, howdy! He'll qualify.

"That man with the flat hat? Oh, he's the S. P. C. A. Fact. He's out here to see that we don't hurt no dumb brutes. Yuh didn't see him make any charges agin' that blue steer that walked all over Camnetti, didja? Who ain't dumb—Joe? Rides steers, don't he?

"Ladee-e-e-es and gentl'men! The next e-vent on this program is the bronc ridin'! The first ri-i-i-ider will be Happy Day on Tumbleweed. Ha-a-a-appy Day on— Yes ma'am, he's a buckin' horse. No, he won't come through the fence. Git away from that chute! Whooee-e-e-e! Rake 'm, cow-boy!

"Yes ma'am, he reached for the apple and came up with a handful of dirt. No, ma'am, he ain't hurt—he's too tired to walk off. Yessir, a parachute would 'a' helped. Next ri-i-ider will be Hennery Simpson on Rollin' Stone. Yes ma'am, another horse. Hello, Willyum! Why ain'tcha ridin'? No? Some of you fellers are gettin' temper'mentil, ain'tcha? How's all yore folks, Andy? That yore wife with yuh? Hello, Mrs. Smith. You folks still livin' together? Oh, I see; Andy ain't got into pitchers yet. Ha, ha, ha, ha!

"No, ma'am; Hennery didn't do so well. He ort to have a Shetland pony to practise on. Hey! Who's that fancy rider goin' over the gate? Oscar what? Blair? Oh, yeah. Next ri-i-i-ider is Oscar Blair on Rockin' Moon. There goes Oscar! Ride 'm, bo-o-o-oy! Don't sit—ride! Use yore spurs. No, ma'am, he don't qualify. Gotta rake 'em to qualify. They ain't got no rake? That's right. I'll speak to 'em about that.

"Next rider is Tom Wilson on Tequila. Sounds like a temperance lecture. Yes'm, he's that high-pocket person with the baby-blue shirt. He's a tough *hombre*. Killed a man in Texas. Ran over him with a mowin' machine. Ha, ha, ha, ha! No, ma'am, there ain't a man qualified today—yet. Yuh can't qualify if yuh don't stay on, can yuh?

"To-o-o-om Wilson on Tequila! Let's go-o-o-o-o! There's a bucker! Climb the moon, bronc! Rake 'm, Tommy! Rake 'em! Use yore feet. In the shoulders! The shoulders, Tom! Them two humps jist ahead of yore feet! A-a-a-a-w, pshaw!

"No, ma'am, he didn't. Good rider? Yes'm—morally. Was I pullin' for him? Shore was. Look at that shirt he's wearin'. I didn't want it. No, ma'am, there ain't no good riders left. They're all gettin' so short-legged that we'll have to breed stock that have got their shoulders four feet nearer their rump.

"Ladee-e-e-e-es and gentl'men! Next e-event will be the steer wrasslin'. Yes'm, there'll be dust—plenty. No, ma'am; nobody will git hurt—not even the S. P. C. A."

## A Wastrel at the Wheel

# Cockney

### By ROY SNIDER

TWO SCORE Great Lakes mariners, mostly masters and mates, were congregated in Durkee's barroom at Oswego, New York.

The trade of the place was brisk and noisy. The mariners were jubilant.

A prolonged strike of American coal miners had ended. Trainloads of anthracite were on the way to Oswego. Before noon of the next day the first of the trains would be switched on the elevated tracks of the terminal trestles and, shortly thereafter, coal would be pouring into the holds of waiting schooners.

Thirty vessels had lain in the harbor for days—some of them for weeks—waiting for cargoes. A coal famine prevailed throughout the neighboring Province of Ontario. A Canadian fuel-distributing corporation had offered a reward of five hundred dollars for the first shipload of coal to be brought into Toronto harbor, and the Toronto city council had duplicated the offer.

At that time the port of Toronto was the center of Canada's lakewise shipping interests.

The dual bonus was to be awarded to the officers and crew of the first vessel coming into port with a coal cargo of three hundred tons or more. Every Lake Ontario skipper, not otherwise bound by non-evadable charter, purposed to carry coal to Toronto, and the prospective westward racing of the coalfleet promised to be spectacular and epochal.

The big schooner *Speedwell*, a "three-an' after"—in lake parlance—Gill McGill, master, was first at the O & W trestle and scarcely could be prevented from being first to load. Conscienceless masters and mates had arranged in their own way to prevent the *Speedwell's* being first to enter Toronto harbor.

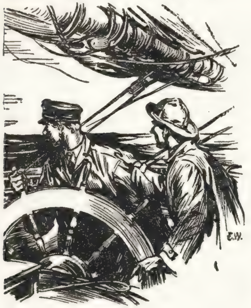
Gill McGill's mate, Athol Owen, was helplessly drunk and effectively stowed away in a cellar, whence he could not escape until certain paid and instructed persons allowed him to do so. The *Speedwell's* forward crew had been enticed from their ship and copiously plied with the beverages which they loved. Gill McGill and his cook were the only survivors of the raid on the schooner's complement.

INTO Durkee's place came "Cockney" Joe, reputed remittance man and wastrel. He convoyed a whisky-wrecked derelict.

According to prevailing and erroneous Great Lakes custom, Joe had been nicknamed "Cockney" simply because he was an Englishman, although the place of his birth was leagues beyond the sound of Bow Bells and his early environment had been vastly different from that of the Cockney proper.

Joe piloted his dilapidated consort to Durkee's bar. The consort's bloodshot

# *of a Great Lakes Schooner*



# Joe, R. N

eyes were set in an unseeing stare. His lower jaw hung slack, and saliva drooled from his mouth. His face bore a ghastly, bluish hue. His body was a-quiver with jerky tremors.

Joe laid a twenty-five cent piece on the bar. The bartender glanced at it, then took appraisive survey of the derelict.

"Two?" he asked Joe shortly.

Joe nodded.

"Both of 'em for my friend, here," he said. "He looks to me a bit off his game."

"I certainly believe you're right," the barman retorted with mock-gravity. "In fact, I'm sure you are."

He set out a bottle and glasses. Joe poured a two-ounce glass full of whisky and, with a bestial sort of eagerness, the consort derelict essayed to take it. His outstretched hand jerked and trembled violently.

"Steady on," Joe adjured him, "you'll spill the grizzly stuff and there's precious little of it for you. Hold hard now and I'll fix you up."

He removed his scarf and passed it half around his companion's neck, so that the ends hung down over the derelict's chest. Then he guided the wreck's shaky hands to grips on the ends of the scarf and placed the glass of whisky in his right hand.

"Steady does it," he said cheerfully. "Pull on the kercher with your left and it'll brace your right till you get it to your mouth."

He bore gently on the other's lefthand. The derelict pulled shakily at the scarf, and his right hand, clutching the glass of whisky, rose unsteadily to his mouth. The glass rattled hideously against the teeth as he gulped its contents.

"Hits right spot," the derelict mumbled thickly. "Feelin' tough."

"Ain't you dry, Joe?" the bartender asked mockingly, after he had rung up Joe's quarter-dollar in the cash register.

"Dry," Joe repeated tragically. "I know you're joking, old chap; but isn't that just a little thick?"

The bartender grinned and pushed bottle and glass toward Joe.

"Help yourself," he chuckled. "It beats me how a man that likes booze as well as you do can shoot his last two bits on somebody else. I don't guess you ever bummed a drink in your life, nor run your face on the stren'th of that money you get every three months."

For twenty seconds Cockney Joe looked steadily into the barman's eyes.

"I don't believe I ever shall," he said quietly. "Here's health."

He swallowed two ounces of far from mellow whisky without blinking.

PETER CONNORS entered Durkee's barroom—grouty, wealthy, bony old Peter Connors, whose individual shipholdings were said to be more extensive than those of any other owner on the Great Lakes.

Peter's shipping and forwarding interests were of huge extent. Responsible agents represented him in every worthwhile port from the head of the lakes to Prince Edward Island. His headquarters office was at Toronto. Business had called him to Oswego.

The *Speedwell* was the only Connors ship in the harbor.

Old Peter halted inside the doors of Durkee's place and looked about. Every one of the assembled mariners met his gaze without hesitation and apparently without emotion.

They were tough-bitted, graceless ruffians, all fighting men and all superbly self-reliant and capable.

Peter Connors knew that his status as ship-owner and capitalist weighed but lightly with them, that they gaged his worth by their own standards and classed him a "good" man because he had proven himself as capable in his own sphere as the best of them had in theirs.

He would have trusted any one of them with the charge of his most valuable ship and a ten-thousand dollar cargo, knowing that only through an act of Providence would the man fail to serve him faithfully and well. He appreciated the mariners at their full and proper worth.

To business associates, who had decried the lakesmen's characteristic rowdyisms, he had said:

"No better breed of men ever happened. Such as they have made Great Lakes commerce possible. It couldn't exist without them. What would Old Pete Connors amount to without a pack of hellions to sail his schooners for him?"

As Old Peter stood surveying the lakesmen in Durkee's place, his mouth twisted into a grim, tight-lipped smile.

"You've put one trick across," he addressed the assemblage dryly. "The first drink's on me. Liquor up!"

Chuckling, jesting, slapping one another's brawny backs, the mariners crowded to the bar. Cockney Joe moved away to give them room and urged his trembly consort away also.

Skippers and mates drank to Mr. Connors, wishing him "good luck," "fur-on-the-chest," "happy days" and sundry other turns of fortune. Old Peter smiled and drank with them.

"Come and bend your elbow," he called to Cockney Joe, after he had paid for the round of drinks.

Joe lounged to a place at the bar beside the ship-owner. "Thanks, awfully, Mr. Connors," he drawled. "I'm a bit off my game and I thought I'd lay off the stuff for awhile. Thanks just the same."

"Busted, are you?" Peter Connors asked bluntly. "Well, how about a small loan for thirty days and your I. O. U. for it? I'm fairly flush myself."

"Very decent of you, and no end handy for me," Joe replied. "Fact is, I'm a bit short of tin."

He accepted two of the five silver dollars which Peter Connors offered him.

"This'll see me over nicely," he stated; then he hastily scribbled an I. O. U. and handed it to the ship-owner.

Financed to "buy his turn," he ordered a drink.

The whisky-vanquished derelict had slumped to the floor when Cockney Joe left him and now lay inert.

"Friend of mine," Joe informed Peter Connors, nodding toward the sprawled figure. "Been hitting the stuff too long and too strong. I'm going to take him to the ghastly police and have them look after him. He's about to have the willies."

Peter Connors glanced at the recumbent one.

"I'll attend to it," he said shortly.

"Hey, Durkee," he called to the proprietor of the saloon, "call the police ambulance for that chap on the floor. He'll be snakey when he wakes up again."

"Right, Mr. Connors," Durkee answered promptly. "I been so busy I didn't notice him."

Old Peter Connors turned to Cockney Joe.

"I'm looking for a crew for the *Speedwell*," he said in a voice loud enough for any one in the place to hear. "How about throwing your bag aboard for the run to Toronto?"

"Suits me nicely," Joe replied. "Fact is I'm about due at Toronto. I'll have a bit of business to attend to there. A letter from across the way is coming." He inclined his head toward the east to indicate the direction of across the way.

"As to a bag, I'm traveling a bit light. Mayn't need more than I'm standin' in. It's only a day and a night to Toronto in a decently good fair wind."

Listening mariners nudged one another. Some of them chuckled. Peter Connors gave them no heed.

"You might try and get some more men for the *Speedwell*," he told Joe. "She's lost her mate and all her forward crowd. There's only the Old Man and the cook left aboard." Then he added with deliberate emphasis, "She's going to take the first coal into Toronto and collect that thousand-dollar bonus that's offered."

The mariners laughed outright, as Peter had known full well they would. The confines of the barroom roared with the volume of their jeers and guffaws.

THE FINAL, ten-ton draught of a seven-hundred-ton cargo rattled down the loading chute and into the *Speedwell's* hold. A tug lay alongside the schooner, ready to move her away from the dock.

Cockney Joe and four nondescript vagabonds stood about the *Speedwell's* deck. Joe had recruited the vagabonds by way of a crew, or rather one of them had accosted him on the dock, expressed a willingness to "go sailin'" and volunteered to induce the other three to accompany him, which Joe considered a stroke of good fortune.

A little, scow-built schooner warped alongside the *Speedwell*, forward of the tug. Her master came on board the larger vessel.

"Say, Cap'n," he addressed Gill McGill, "would it be all right for me to tow out with yuh? It's kind of hard gittin' out of here in a nor'east breeze, an' Billy Ferris, here, on the tug, he says he'll put me clear of the piers for a dollar if I tow alongside of you. He'll charge me five if he tows me out alone. Do yuh mind if I go out with yuh?"

Gill McGill's mind was occupied with other matters. He only partly comprehended the man's request.

"All right," he answered shortly; then he called to Cockney Joe, "Start the mizzen."

The covers of the sails already had been removed and the gaskets had been cast off. Cockney Joe led the vagabonds aft. Half a dozen sailors leaped on board the *Speedwell* from the dock.

"All right, Cap'n," one of them sang out, "we'll help you make canvas as you tow out, and come back on the tug."

"That's the ticket, boys," one of the schooner masters standing on the dock called out approvingly. "Get under way, Gill, and give the rest of us a chance to load."

Men were already casting off the *Speedwell's* mooring lines. The six volunteer sailors went strenuously to work, making canvas. A bell clanged in the tug's engine-room. The *Speedwell* moved away from the dock.

Clear of the harbor pier-ends, with all her lower cloth set and the gaff topsails out of stops, the big schooner, heeling to a fresh northeast wind, commenced to pick up her way.

The tug's engine slowed. One of the six sailors cast off her stern line and jumped aboard with his companions. Cockney Joe let go the tug's bow line. Gill McGill was at the schooner's wheel. The four vagabonds rushed forward, cast off the lines of the scow-schooner and, with derisive yells, leaped to the smaller vessel's deck. The six sailors on board the tug roared jeering laughter.

Cockney Joe walked aft along the lee alleyway.

"It looks as though the blighters intended to desert when they joined us, sir," he remarked in a slightly nettled tone to Gill McGill. "No doubt those moldy chaps ashore put them up to it. It'll be a bit stiff for the two of us to sail her to Toronto, what?"

Gill McGill stared at him wide-eyed.

"Sail her to Toronto!" he repeated, "my awful gosh, man, you're crazy as a hellgramite."

"A—quite likely," Joe retorted. "In fact, I must be. And as I was about to say, those worms who put up the putrid game on you would be no end bashed if you should sail her up the lake in spite of them."

With her engine turning at half speed the tug held her forward way close to the schooner's weather quarter, the grinning tug-master ready to come alongside again to tow the *Speedwell* back to harbor, as soon as he should receive the hail of distress which he felt assured Gill McGill must utter. The treacherous little scow-schooner was already bearing away for the harbor-mouth.

For a moment Gill McGill stared, nonplussed, at Cockney Joe; then with his right hand he smote his chest mightily.

"By the pawls of Satan's patent winch," he yelled, "we'll do it! Blast their stinkin' souls, we'll show them! Here, take the wheel a minute while I tell them yellow, hound-hatched scum what I think of them."

He relinquished the wheel to Joe and stepped to the quarter rail to deliver an oration that stung even the superlatively callous sensibilities of the tug's crew and the six sailors.

While yet he reviled and denounced, the *Speedwell's* cook came on deck. He was a plump, middle-aged negro with a peg leg. He stumped to the lee rail and peered overboard.

"Hey!" he shouted, turning his face toward the quarter deck. "You's a damfool captain an' a drinkin' English bum. I'm swimmin' back to Oswego while the swimmin's good an' safe."

Forthwith he vaulted over the rail and plunged into the lake.

"Captain, excuse my interrupting you," Cockney Joe addressed Gill McGill. "The lurid cook has deserted. I fancy the perishin' tug'll pick him up."

Gill McGill's profane oration ended at once.

SETTING the schooner's gaff topsails was a slow but not particularly laborious undertaking for one man. Passed under thumb-cleats, the halyards, tacks and sheets of the fore and maintopsails were long enough to be carried to the nigger-heads of the donkey-engine, which performed a creditable job of hoisting and sheeting home while Cockney Joe held slack; and the expedient of preliminary stopping of the gear with selvagee strops facilitated the work of belaying.

A "messenger" was employed to supplement the lengths of the various units of the mizzentopsail gear.

When the vessel was finally under full sail, Gill McGill held council with Cockney Joe while he steered.

"You're an awful damn fool for gettin' me into the notion of goin' up the lake so short-handed," he asserted. "I'm a considerably damder one for listenin' to yuh; but that's neither here nor there, now that we got started."

Joe nodded.

"Quite likely," he agreed, "and—a—that bonus of two hundred quid'll come handy, don't you think?"

"That's just the point," said Gill McGill, "but not in the way you might think I mean.

"I don't rightly belong here on fresh water. I started my goin' to sea in the United States Navy. I was bosun when I left."

"Indeed!" Joe breathed politely.

"These lake fellows don't hardly consider me one of themselves," McGill continued. "I don't mean that they've got it in for me or anything like that. They'd of put this lousy trick over on anybody else that'd happened to be first at the trestle, if they could, and thought nothin' of it. They're a rough crowd, but good-natured as hell when yuh know how to take them. Nothin' small or mean about 'em. If we get this hooker into Toronto ahead of them, they'll honor us for it, an' be ready to lick anybody that says a word against us."

"So will we," said Cockney Joe. "In fact, we'd have every right to."

"We certainly would and would," Gill McGill agreed, "but it'd go wider an' amount to more if it was to come out that it was a Navy-trained man that done the trick, an' not just Gill McGill. Do you get what I mean?"

"I certainly do," Cockney Joe asserted warmly. "I say, now, that's real cricket."

McGill eyed him queerly.

"I haven't heard that word for a long time," he said. "Not since I was in the United States sloop-of-war, *Essex*."

"The *Essex!*" Joe exclaimed. "I say, were you at Ber—" He stopped abruptly. A flush mounted his cheeks. "A—I—yes, I believe I heard somewhere that you'd served in the *Essex*. A very smart ship, I've been told."

The steering of the schooner demanded all of McGill's attention for the ensuing two or three minutes; when he had the vessel steadied on her course, he looked astern.

"There's three vessels leavin' harbor together," he observed. "That'll be the *Ella Merton*, the *Dolphin* and the *Arctic*. They're loaded for Kingston, and won't bother us any. The next two'll be bound for Montreal, and the *Emerald*'ll load at the same time they do. She's bound for Toronto and she's the one that we got to look out for. We'll on'y have an hour's start of her."

"This one has the heels of her, hasn't she?" Cockney Joe asked.

"She has in a way," McGill explained. "With the wind abeam or full-an'-by, this old girl'll run away from any of 'em. The *Emerald's* got square canvas for'ard, you know. Fores'l foretops'l an' bat-wings. In a followin' wind that stuff pulls better than any fore an' aft sails do. *Emerald*'ll beat this lady, runnin' free."

THE *Speedwell* was eight miles out of Oswego when the *Emerald* cleared. *Emerald* was of about the same tonnage as *Speedwell*. Besides her fore-and-aft foresail and fore gaff topsail she carried a supplementary square foresail and a big single topsail with triangular bat-wings set above it. In Great Lakes idiom she was known as a "square three-and-after"; and was of a type fairly common in the Lake marine.

The brisk, northeast breeze went down with the sun, after carrying the *Speedwell* westward to a point abreast of Charlotte, New York, and about ten miles offshore. For half an hour after sunset the vessel barely held steerage way; then the airs petered out entirely and she lay becalmed.

Little more than a mile astern of her, the *Emerald* drifted under lazily flapping cloth, while farther to the eastward there were four schooners in a group and two more in sight, hull down on the horizon.

"They're strung out all the way from here to Oswego by now," Gill McGill averred. "There's five more that I know of, waitin' for coal at Charlotte. Lucky for us that they didn't get the railroads haulin' to Charlotte first. It's half a day closer to Toronto than Oswego is."

He was walking uneasily, back and forth on the quarter.

"Wind's goin' to the westward," he predicted. "If it holds off till midnight it'll blow hard. I hope to heck it don't. How could us two reef her if it was breezin' anyways stiff?"

"It would be a bit awkward," Cockney Joe admitted, "but I fancy we'd wangle it somehow." He looked appraisively aloft. "Mightn't it be just as well to snug her down for it, in case we do get a blow," he suggested.

"Maybe it would," McGill agreed. "Let's go to it."

While they were aloft, stowing the gaff topsails, they observed that the *Emerald's* canvas was also in process of being shortened.

"We ain't makin' no mistake," Gill McGill declared. "Old Sam Malcolm, that sails the *Emerald*, is a weather-wise hound. He's got considerable advantage in havin' a crew to get the rags on her again when he needs them, though."

After somewhat more than two hour's hard work, the *Speedwell's* spread of sail was reduced to forestaysail and reefed fore and mizzensails. Her mainsail had been taken in and stowed.

Gill McGill and Cockney Joe rested, sitting on the cover of the after hatch.

"We was talkin' about that word 'cricket', Joe," Gill McGill commenced speaking. "When I was in the *Essex,* we was at Bermuda one time and there was a British man-o'-war on station there, called the *Thunderer.* We figured we had the crack cutter crew of the world in the *Essex,* and the *Thunderer's* crowd had the same idea about a boat crew of theirs. We never had a chance to prove which was wrong until one day the *Essex'* first lootenant was goin' ashore and so was the *Thunderer's*—they call it lefftenant in the British navy.

"Anyway, the *Essex'* cutter, with it's crack crew, got away a little ahead of the lime-juicers and rowed kind of slow for them to catch up. When they was abreast they went to it. Boys-o-boys! How them two crews did yank their oars! The two cox'ns was urgin' them. Our lootenant was kind of leanin' forward, excited, and encouragin' the boys. The British lefftenant just sat there in his boat as if he didn't know there was anything special goin' on and wasn't no ways interested, anyhow. Them two big boats was fairly leapin' out of the water at every stroke of the oars. They rowed exactly even for half a mile and then our Number Two man's oar broke—snapped clean off.

"Now, ordinarily, you'd say that the race was lost right there, because seven oars hadn't a ghost of a show against eight. But, no sir; that English lefftenant must of had eyes like a hawk and a mind like a steel trap, because just the second that that oar broke he snaps out at *his* Number Two man—"

"Toss oar, Number Two."

"That Number Two musta been a mind-reader or somethin'; he had his oar tossed the minute the officer spoke.

"The *Essex'* lootenant didn't hardly know what to make of it for a second or two, but he was a quick-witted feller, and he salutes that English chap. The lime-juicer returns the salute and keeps on lookin' as if he wasn't interested. The cox'n of the *Thunderer's* boat grins at ours and says, 'Cricket, what?' "

Cockney Joe cleared his throat.

"That was a grand go with the oars," he said enthusiastically. "I never saw—"

"We went alongside the landing stage exactly even," Gill McGill finished his tale. "Neither one of them boat crews was the best."

Joe arose from his sitting posture, went to the side and drew a bucket of water from which he drank copiously. When he returned to the hatch, McGill stretched out for a nap with a muttered suggestion that Joe do likewise.

THE CALM prevailed for half the night. Shortly after midnight the wind came, strong and growling from the westward. Close-hauled on her port tack, the *Speedwell* lay over to it and forged ahead, pointing northwest by west.

The breeze rose quickly beyond half a gale and kicked up a heavy lump of sea.

In less than an hour a full gale blew and the schooner went thrashing to windward, carrying all the cloth she could comfortably drag.

She held her port tack until some time after daylight, when the north shore of the lake was in plain sight; then she went about and stood away on her starboard tack, her lee bulwarks buried and her forward deck deluged with the water of boarding seas.

Hull down, astern and to leeward, another vessel labored in the gale.

"That's the *Emerald,*" Gill McGill declared. "She can't begin to go to windward with this one nor stand the sea that this one can. Sam Malcolm'll nose her into shelter somewhere. We got a little edge on him now."

McGill and Cockney Joe spelled each other at the wheel and on deck watches and managed to produce indifferently palatable food in the galley. Both were weary and in need of sleep.

Joe spoke feelingly of the potent properties of the whisky of which he was deprived.

During the forenoon the wind abated somewhat, hauled to the southwest and headed the schooner off; then it swung back to the west and breezed up again in greater volume than before.

When they picked up the south shore in the afternoon, the *Speedwell* was making rather bad weather of it and had commenced to leak.

"Looks like we gotta run in somewhere an' ride it out," Gill McGill admitted morosely. "Maybe she'll fetch Oak Orchard."

No other vessel was in sight on the lake.

"They've all got a bellyful of it," he averred. "They'd run back to Charlotte, them that was to wind'ard of it, and others has all ducked in somewhere. *Emerald's* most likely headin' for Charlotte right now."

Cockney Joe rubbed his chin and frowned.

"It'd be a bit awkward for us to run in for shelter anywhere, wouldn't it?" he said. "Port authorities would never let us out again without a crew, which I'll wager we couldn't get before the slitherin' *Emerald* or some of the rest of them were so far on their way to Toronto that we'd be bally harmless."

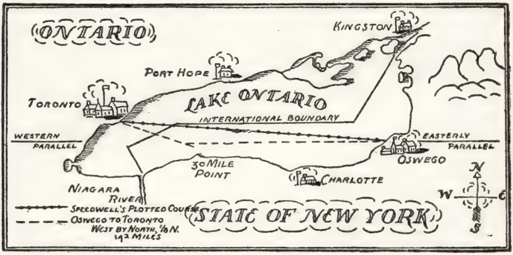
McGill scowled and shrugged his shoulders.

"It seems to me I heard that you got a new forestaysail when you were at Oswego," Joe said, "and I believe you have a mainstaysail that you tried a while back and found was too unhandy. I've a notion we might bend them on an'—"

"Bend 'em on for trys'ls and ride it out hove to," McGill interrupted jubilantly. "Gosh! I never thought of that—an' me a deepwater man. We'll rig the mainstays'l instead of the fores'l and bend the new forestays'l on the mizzen."

It was gruelling work for two men.

Cockney Joe performed the greater portion of the work; McGill, perforce, devoting no small portion of his time to steering and hoisting with the donkey-engine.



The forestaysail was temporarily taken in while the mizzen was lowered and the new forestaysail, improvised as a storm trysail, set in its place. The vessel fell off under the urge of the forward trysail and wallowed sickeningly in the trough of the sea. She responded sluggishly to the pull of the inadequate after trysail and took a distressingly long time to come up. The forestaysail was hoisted again, reefed to balance the reduced after cloth. The wheel was lashed hard over—and the miracle was accomplished.

The *Speedwell* rode comfortably, and passably easily, four and a half points off the wind, and with her canvas boarded from the port side.

"By the holy rudder gudgeon!" Gill McGill swore admiringly. "She'll ratch across the lake and fetch away to windward of where we went around on the other tack."

Cockney Joe shook his head.

"Sorry," he said, "but I'm afraid she won't. 'S a fact that very few people really understand the drift of a vessel, hove to. She doesn't make headway, as you'd think. She doesn't actually make any sternway either, but she does go edgin' off sidewise, and as she doesn't lie dead in the wind, she goes quarterin' a little, too. 'Specially one of these shallow-draft lake craft. I believe they're the only vessels of their size in the world that have center-boards."

McGill regarded him thoughtfully.

"Maybe they are," he said, "and probably you're right about the matter of drift; but I'm darn sure of one thing; you never learnt that on the lakes—nor in a focsle either."

Joe laughed shortly.

"No, I—a—didn't learn it on the lakes," he said. "I—a—a fellow doesn't always remember just where he does pick up these things."

Gill McGill smiled shrewdly.

"In the British navy, f'r instance," he hinted. "Say," he exclaimed on sudden impulse, "I ain't the kind to butt in on any man's private affairs, but I'll put it this way: The first lefftenant of the *Thunderer* was a man named Travers. The captain's name was Otterby. They didn't get along at all. Otterby was mean an' dirty.

"They was up at the Admiralty House in Bermuda, at one of the official feeds, both drinkin' quite a lot, I've been told. Captain Otterby said somethin' rotten about Travers' sister. Done it purposely to rile Travers, figurin' that as he was ranking officer, the lefftenant daren't do anything about it. But he was wrong. Travers waded into him and give him the beatin' of his life, right there in Admiralty House, before all the officers and high mucky-mucks.

"He done right. Otterby had it comin' to him. The lefftenant lost his commission over it—cashiered they call it. He refused to apologize or explain or anything else. Of course, I don't know what become of him afterwards. Anyway, that Captain Otterby was a skunk."

Cockney Joe nodded.

"He was all of that," he said quietly. "He was the only British officer I ever knew that was moldy."

He turned away abruptly, walked forward and busied himself with the coil of the fore throat halyards. McGill watched him thoughtfully.

"I've been pretty dumb," the *Speedwell's* skipper muttered to himself. "Been tryin' all along to think where I'd seen him before. I guess I know who he is, now, all right. Englishmen is mighty hard to understand."

AFTER a spell at the pump, the two weary mariners rested, sitting once more on the cover of the after hatch.

"We'll shake up some grub and then take a snooze while the chance is good." Gill McGill proposed. "Lord knows we need some sleep."

"And a nip," Cockney Joe added naively. "Fancy a man askin' me yesterday if I were dry."

McGill stepped to the forward doorway of the cabin and paused with one foot on the coaming. He commenced to speak, with his head half-turned toward Joe.

"You'd better—"

The schooner lurched suddenly. McGill swung sidewise, tripped over the coaming and fell down the two companion steps into the cabin.

Joe sprang up and hurried to the doorway.

"Hurt?" he asked.

McGill groaned, attempted to rise and slumped back on the deck of the cabin.

"My leg!" he gasped. "Feels like I busted it."

His left leg was broken. The fracture was below the knee.

Cockney Joe exhibited a good working knowledge of the proper manner of setting, splinting, and bandaging a fractured limb, which appeared in no way to surprize Gill McGill.

"Navy way," he muttered, when the waning of the agony permitted coherent utterance. "Officer has to learn how to do everything."

"Too bad it happened just now," Joe commented briefly. "Rather awkward. Annoying, in fact. We could do with a little brandy, now. Set both of us right."

Throughout the evening the gale blew fiercely. Night came, and the god of the west wind relaxed not.

Joe kept fitful, all-around watch, taking occasional spells at the pump, firing the donkey's boiler when necessary, observing and calculating the vessel's drift as best he could. Between spells, he slept.

At shortly after three o'clock in the morning, he awakened from one of his catnaps, noted that the force of the gale was unabated, tried the pump, shoveled coal into the fire-box of the donkey and lay down to sleep again.

The hiss of steam, escaping from the donkey boiler's safety-valve awakened him. The sun of a new day was half above the horizon. Less than five miles away over the port bow, Joe saw the loom of the Ontario shore line.

"Wind's shifted," he exclaimed. "Comin' out of the no'th'ard."

The wind had swung to the north and had abated to the proportions of half a gale. A sea, already making from the northward, was chopping across the greater run from the west.

Joe closed the drafts of the donkey boiler, saw that there was no lack of water, then went aft and released the wheel from its beckets. He slacked away the mizzensheet. The schooner promptly payed off and gathered forging way.

Joe put the helm hard down and brought her around on the starboard tack; then he let the mizzensheet run off and, after making it fast, went forward and eased off the sheets of the forward trysail and the forestaysail. Next he climbed out on the horn and cast off the stops of the jibs.

The *Speedwell* wallowed sluggishly into the westerly sea, steering herself erratically.

Cockney Joe returned inboard from the jib-boom, went aft again and found a pair of marine glasses.

"I don't know much about this blessed shore," he muttered to himself, "but maybe I'll have the luck to pick up something in the way of a landmark that'll put me right."

Studying the shore line through the glasses, he discovered, six or seven miles to the northeast, a squat, wooden lighthouse, and the piers of a harbor entrance.

"That'll be Port Hope," he soliloquized. "Hm-m! The old gal has done better than I expected her to. I figured we'd fetch ten miles farther down the frigid lake. Not bad at all."

He awakened Gill McGill in his little stateroom.

"It's after daylight, Captain," he reported. "We're about five miles off the north shore and six or seven miles to the west'ard of Port Hope. Wind's died to half a gale and shifted to the no'th'ard. It'll be well abaft the beam for the run to Toronto. D'ye suppose, if I carry you on deck an' make you snug in a chair, you could manage a go at the wheel while I get the perishin' canvas on her?"

McGill regarded him with unfeigned surprize.

"Off the north shore, above Port Hope?" he pondered. "Why, say! She'd fetch Port Hope harbor on her port tack from here, wouldn't she?"

"I hardly think it," Joe answered. "Believe she'd look more'n half a mile to loo'ard of the piers, from here."

McGill emitted a grunt.

"There's nothin' to stop us goin' around off the pier-ends, makin' a short hitch inshore and reachin' in on the next tack, is there?" he demanded testily.

"A—certainly not," Joe admitted. "Do you think you can manage a go at the wheel?"

When McGill was at the helm in as comfortable a position as circumstances permitted, Joe brought forth the glasses for another survey of the shore line. What he beheld caused him to shout:

"Blast me! There's a vessel coming out

of Port Hope harbor under sail. A square three-an'-after, as I live! It's that diabolical *Emerald*." He turned to Gill McGill. "Toronto, what?" he queried laconically.

McGill nodded.

"Nothin' else for it," he said bruskly.

Taking off the storm trysails and getting up normal cloth while the schooner rolled and wallowed in the cross sea was an enormous job for Cockney Joe to undertake, aided though he was by the sturdy donkey-engine. When the final unit of the lower canvas was set and drawing properly, he was dripping perspiration, breathing heavily and feeling rather shaky in his legs. Gill McGill was gasping at the helm.

The *Emerald*, under all her lower canvas, was less than two miles astern.

"Kin yuh take 'er, Joe? It's killin' me," the *Speedwell's* master groaned. "Gimme five minutes' spell to catch my wind."

Joe took the wheel.

"W—wind's lightin' a little," he panted. "We'll break out the tops'ls directly."

MANNED by a full crew, the *Emerald* had her upper cloth set and had reduced the distance between the two vessels by half a mile before Joe got the *Speedwell's* kites spread. Thereafter the *Emerald* came no closer.

For hours the two vessels raced up the lake, holding their respective positions without change. Cockney Joe worked heroically. Gill McGill endured agonies in striving to be of assistance.

The schooners were abreast of the Scarboro Highlands, ten miles or so northeast of Toronto, when the breeze commenced to fall. The *Speedwell* was less than two miles off the Eastern Channel piers of Toronto harbor when the breeze left her entirely.

Light airs favored the *Emerald* for some time longer, and she crept up to within a quarter of a mile of the *Speedwell* before she was becalmed.

The schooners were flying their respective burgees, signaling for tugs. Three tugs were coming out of Toronto harbor under full steam.

Gill McGill watched the oncoming towboats through the glasses.

"First one's the *Dauntless*," he announced. "She's a Mathews Line tug, same line as the *Emerald*. She'll run past us and pick up the *Emerald*, of course. Next one's the *Cascade*. She's one of Peter Connors', and she's damn sure to come to us. The last one that's comin' is the *Frank Jackman*, an independent. I dunno what her skipper expects to do, with two company tugs ahead of him."

The tugs came on speedily. The *Dauntless* rushed past the *Speedwell*, a hundred yards away, tons of disturbed water piling about her bows, her wake a foamy swirl. Less than a hundred feet astern of her, raced the *Cascade*. Her master signaled to Gill McGill, pointed to *Frank Jackman* and gesticulated toward the *Dauntless*.

"I see what he's up to," McGill cried. "He's goin' to keep the *Dauntless* away from the *Emerald* until the *Frank Jackman* picks us up. There's Old Pete Connors on board the *Jackman*, and he's got a crew along with him to help us take her in. Trust Old Pete every time."

The *Dauntless* came abreast of the *Emerald* and swung in a half-circle to come alongside. The *Cascade's* master altered his helm to bring his tug between the *Dauntless* and her prospective convoy. Then there ensued one of the "jockeying" contests which were common to the lake tugs of the period. The *Cascade's* master strove to keep the *Dauntless* away from the *Emerald*. The skipper of the *Dauntless* maneuvered to evade the *Cascade's* interference.

The *Frank Jackman* swung in a semicompass and came up on the *Speedwell's* weather quarter. Old Peter Connors scrambled on board the schooner while Cockney Joe was taking the tug's bow line. Five sun-tanned stalwarts who were grouped on the *Jackman's* forward deck made no move to assist in any way.

"These boys'll come aboard and help get the canvas off her as soon as you're through the piers," Peter Connors shouted to Gill McGill, indicating the five stalwarts. "The bonus goes to the officers and crew, you know. Might be a hitch if anybody helped to bring her in. I'm payin' these boys good an' high. They're all satisfied."

He was walking aft as he talked.

"Gosh! What's happened?" he cried, when he caught sight of McGill's bandaged leg.

"Busted it," Gill informed him briefly. "Joe set it. He brought the vessel up the lake alone. He's a crackin' good man, is Joe."

When the tug's lines were fast, her skipper belled the engine "full ahead" and then whistled a signal to the *Cascade's* master, who desisted from his interfering with the *Dauntless* and came steaming toward the *Speedwell.*

The *Speedwell* passed into Toronto harbor, full two hundred yards ahead of the *Emerald.* As soon as she was through the piers, the five stalwarts came on board and turned to taking in canvas.

Immediately after the schooner was docked, Cockney Joe approached Peter Connors.

"If you wouldn't mind, Mr. Connors, I'd like to have a little advance. Five dollars'll do me nicely. I want to go ashore for a drink an' a mug-up, an' maybe a couple more drinks an' a bit of food."

Peter Connors gave him five dollars without comment.

"Thanks awfully," Cockney Joe said hastily. "Look for me back inside an hour." Forthwith he hurried ashore.

Old Peter sighed and shook his head.

"Funny sort of duck," he muttered.

In the seclusion of the *Speedwell's* cabin, Gill McGill talked long and earnestly with Peter Connors, and the subject of his discourse was Joe.

Peter Connors listened attentively, occasionally nodding or shaking his head or uttering a word of comment.

"I read about the affair," he said, when Gill had had his say. "I remember seeing the picture with the caption, 'First Lieutenant Joseph Beverly Travers, R. N.' I never guessed that it was Cockney Joe, although I've often wondered who he really is. That Captain Otterby, of the *Thunderer* was an out and out no-gooder."

"He was all of that and worse." Gill McGill asserted.

"Anyway, Joe is a linging good sailor and a whole man, and we'll get him squared away again to another start. He deserves it," Old Peter Connors declared.

COCKNEY JOE returned to the *Speedwell* in exuberant mood, bathed, barbered, fed to repletion and plainly stimulated by whisky.

"We've just been talking about you, Joe," Peter Connors announced abruptly. "You can have the mate's berth in this vessel."

Joe rubbed his chin and evinced embarrassment.

"A—it's kind of you, Mr. Connors. I appreciate it awfully," he said.

"But you know, I'm a bit of a drifter—rather lazy, in fact. I like to loaf about and—a—do as I please. Don't care for responsibility and all that. I saved a bit of money, at one time, you know; and came into a little when my uncle passed out. Bought an annuity, a hundred an' fifty pounds a year, cut up in quarters to make it handy. With that an' what little work I do, I get along quite cozy."

He paused, noting the skeptically tolerant looks with which his hearers regarded him.

"I—a haven't a mate's license," he ended somewhat lamely.

"Do you think you'd have much trouble getting one?" Peter Connors inquired with mild sarcasm.

"Possibly not," said Cockney Joe. "Never thought much about it, but I believe I might wangle it. My discharge from the navy might help. I rated quartermaster when I left."

"You rated what?" Peter Connors and Gill McGill cried in chorus.

"Quartermaster," Joe repeated. "*Warspite* was my last ship. Captain Sutherlawn, retired now."

He addressed an amiable remark to Gill McGill.

"I was no end int'rested when you told about the old *Essex* and the *Thunderer's* cutter crew. The *Thunderer's* chaps rowed a tie with the *Warspite's* crack crew at the fleet regatta just a while before that. I cox'd the *Warspite's* boat. All I could do to keep from cutting in and telling you about it. Almost did, in fact; but, of course, it wouldn't have been sportin' to have spoilt your yarn like that."

Gill McGill and Old Peter Connors regarded him dumbly. Both knew that the man they called Cockney Joe was telling and acting a great lie; and the heart of each of them warmed to him strongly because they understood why the man was lying.

After a pause, Old Peter Connors asked deferentially—

"Would you mind telling us who you are?" He knew that he would not be answered truthfully.

"Why, not at all," Cockney Joe rejoined, with perfectly simulated mild surprize at the form of the request, "Name's Blakely, as you know. I was born at Chichester in Sussex. Went to school at Saint Winnifred's. My governor was a solicitor. I started to read law with him, but chucked it up and went to sea. I'm an only son. My folks are all gone now."

Ostensibly, enlightenment came to him.

"Oh, I say," he exclaimed, "did you gentlemen suppose that I was Lieutenant Travers? My word! I'd have put you right in a jiffy if I'd known. Never imagined it, on my word of honor, though I was a bit puzzled once, over something that Captain McGill said to me. Went away an' messed about with the perishin' throat halyards to try an' get it clear in my head what he meant."

Captain McGill indulged in a self-deprecatory grimace.

"What became of Lefftenant Travers?" he asked uncomfortably.

"He's plantin' sugar at Barbados. Doin' very well at it," Cockney Joe informed him readily.

Gill McGill's mind failed to form a thought for which he could find coherent expression.

Shrewd Old Peter Connors retained the services of a legion of men. He knew all sorts of all classes of men; and he knew, as he looked at Cockney Joe, that this man could never be "squared away to a new start."

"Joe," he said slowly, "you're a linging good sailor, no matter what else you are or have been; and you're mate of the *Speedwell* as soon as you want to be and for as long as you want the berth."

"Thanks," said Joe without great enthusiasm. "I'll have a try at gettin' a lurid mate's ticket. And now," he abruptly switched to another subject of consideration, "if you don't mind, I'd like to go ashore again to see about the draft for this last quarter. I'll remember the little account, Mr. Connors, and a—thanks awfully! Five dollars advance an' the chit for two dollars at Oswego. 'By!"

When Cockney Joe had gone, Gill McGill said dully to Old Peter Connors—

"He won't draw a sober breath, now, till he's spent the last nickel of his remittance money.

"Isn't it horrible! When they broke him in the navy he went down so bad that he doesn't even want to get up again. They smashed everything there was in him."

Old Peter Connors shook his head.

"Nearly everything, but not quite," he amended. "There's nothing on earth that could effect his regard for the honor of his name. If you crucified him for it, he wouldn't admit that he's Lieutenant Travers gone wrong."

McGill nodded.

"You're right," he said. "It's the first time in my life that I ever admired a man for telling a bare-faced lie."

They were silent for a minute or two; then Old Peter Connors spoke softly:

"First Lieutenant Joseph B. Travers, R. N., alias Cockney Joe. A gentleman under either name!"

# *Adventure's Abyssinian* EXPEDITION

### By GORDON MacCREAGH

*Notes from the field*

A FULL day's trek brought us to the end of this lake; by which I judge its length to be twenty-five miles. Here, living on top of a steep slate shale outcrop, a natural robber-baron fortress, was that other German pioneer, the hermit who paid six dollars a year for his labor.

This was the man who did not want to sell out. And no wonder—he has an estate of some three square miles bordering on the lake. During twenty years of unremitting labor he has built for himself—or rather has transplanted and grown for himself—a six-mile corral of candelabra cactus. Thick, impermeable; a defense against hyenas—or elephants—and here he keeps his three hundred head of cattle and a herd of ostriches.

An astonishing sight is this green mathematical square, subdivided into smaller squares, seen from the top of the robber roost. He has a windmill to draw him water from the lake. He has coffee, or cotton, or whatever he chooses to plant; and he plans to build him a motor-truck road to the railroad and so to furnish butter to a starved metropolis, where three hundred Europeans yammer for it. He talks, too, of an ice-house, and fish from the lake for those hungry white folks to whom a half-smoked and sun-dried native catfish is a treat.

With an old Schuetsen rifle he has hunted the surrounding country just about clean. His talk is of kudu on the near-by hills and of various African "bok" and "beeste" on the plain. But:

"Let me see," he says in reminiscence. "that was in 'sixteen or 'seventeen when that war was going on in Europe. Yes, I killed the last hartbeeste in July of 'seventeen."

He reads Kant and Blavatsky, and he embarks upon no journey or venture without first consulting a Galla witch-doctor on the omens. He was waiting for us. A witch-woman had cast the stones for him and told him that white men were coming and—unguessable even—a white woman. So he had a great bowl of curdled milk ready as a thirst-quencher for the guests.

No, quite distinctly, he does not want to sell. But, says he, wistfully, he might consider a partner with a little capital for that motor-truck.

Here was exciting news about our hippo. A river runs from this first lake into the one which we had been aiming for. A steep-sided stream ten miles long—Bull-ullu, it is called by the Gallas, because it bubbles along, which means also that it must therefore be shallow. Well, our hippo had come up this waterway but a few days ago to visit a lady acquaintance of the upper lake, who had been moaning mournfully for company for the past two weeks; and he had only yesterday night started back, warned without doubt by the *anu*, the protective water spook that looks after hippo interests. Yet if we were to make an offering to the *anu* and were to hurry, we might possibly be lucky enough to catch the beast in the shallows of the river before he should get to the deeper fastness of his own lake.

Was it due to the cunning of the *anu* or was it sheer native dumbness that delayed this information till it was too late in the day to pull up stakes and start on a long stalk down along the river bank? Not till an hour before sundown did the story come to us; which meant that *nagadis*, even though we had driven them with whips, would not have been loaded and ready to start till two hours after dark. So we were forced to lose that chance and stay over night in camp.

And that night all the hyenas that had been wishing for the past few years that they could get into that cactus corral came and howled round our camp. Which meant again that it was with a train of raggedy, nervous mules and irritable *nagadis* that we made a late start the next morning.

We drew blank on the river—the *anu* had worked well—and it was afternoon again when we camped on the outskirts of a Galla village at the point where the Bulbullu ran into the lake, or rather a mile and a half distant from the water's edge. For this was our hippo's home lake, the lake we had come so far to visit; and a mile at least, so the natives said, was the beast's feeding range, and they had learned to live well beyond that limit.

That information didn't come until late again, and it took the rest of the afternoon to establish friendly relations with the suspicious natives. It was necessary first to send a boy with offers of backshish, and to buy a smoked-blackened earthen potful of the dirtiest sour milk in the world from the ugliest old woman in the village; and to consume all of it—to prove our good-will, before we could get down to small-talk with the men folks and, what was important to us, with the local hunter.

Oh yes, he told us, the big *gumare* had come home yesterday afternoon, splashing through the shallow river like a herd of cattle, and was now sleeping not far from the river mouth. At dusk he would come out to feed; and he, the hunter, would show us exactly where if we would first give him a backshish of five cartridges.

Jim knew all about cartridge currency and had brought along a big belt full. These are cartridges made to fit the old "Gras" rifles, of which there are so many in the country—about .450 caliber they look to be, and they pass as small change at the rate of five or six to the Abyssinian dollar in far-away places where money will not be accepted under any circumstances. It does not matter that there may not be any sort of a rifle in a community spread over a day's march in any direction; these Gras cartridges are good for a goat or three or four fowls or fifty eggs—including some good ones—or a great five-gallon pot of native beer, apiece.

An astute Greek gentleman in Addis Abeba does a land-office business in manufacturing this currency for caravaneers. He buys up empty shells and reprimes them and fills them with a fairly innocuous mixture of mud and saltpetre and something that goes off with plenty of noise—quite often—and he corks them with a fat lead bullet; and there you are.

The business is every bit as illegitimate as liquor in the United States; so everybody knows where to get them. And nobody ever complains about the quality of the product any more than a gentleman would complain to his bootlegger. Moreover, these cartridges are not expected to be used, but to be carried about maybe for years, as money; nor can cartridges, as the clever manufacturer explains, be expected to improve with age.

So there is never any comeback. And anyway, they are quite as good as the eggs that one buys with them.

The hunter of Lake Abiata, then, for two cartridges agreed to take us out along the lake shore where this big hippo would feed. And as soon as it began to get dark, take us out he did. And he enjoined the greatest caution upon us not to stumble, not to let metal clink upon metal, above all not to whisper, for the hearing of hippos was very acute, and that of this beast particularly so, and his temper in proportion. One sound of us, one sniff down wind, and he would charge with great mouth agape as wide as a crocodile's.

With all this precaution, it was quite dark by the time we began to reach the lake shore. The moon would not be up for an hour yet, and the dark was the clammy mist of wide water spaces. We stumbled along with a clatter that was appalling in the stillness. Boots squeaked like scurrying rats, cord riding-breeches rasped leg against leg, rifle slings rattled as if they were chains. With each new noise we held our breaths and tingled, expecting any moment to hear a roar and to feel, rather than see, a huge bulk hurtling toward us.

Yet we survived. Till presently, sure enough, directly in the path where the cunning old hunter was leading us, three dim shapes loomed ahead. By bending low we could discern them against the black gray of the skyline. One of them must be our big bull. We halted to regain our breaths, and lips to ear arranged how we would shoot. We stalked by inches now. Twenty feet close we must get at the very least, for rifle sights were not to be thought about; we would have to shoot by the feel of the general direction.

Forty feet. Thirty feet. Twenty. The beasts remained amazingly unsuspicious. Almost tame. Five more feet.

Then one of them lifted his head and whinnied. The other two lifted theirs, tossed their manes; and the three of them trotted off with a clatter of hoofs on the hard ground. Immediately whole flocks of a pestiferous plover kind of bird that is the bane of the African hunter rose and screamed all round us till the night was full of the jeering of imps of the nether dark.

The effect upon the keen and crafty old native hunter was something beyond a white man's comprehension. He stated with the calmness of conviction that the birds were a sign; he could tell, from the way they screamed, that the hippos were out, feeding on the reed flats which we knew existed half a mile to our left, where the Bulbullu ran into the lake.

We were not nearly so convinced. But since we had come so far, we might as well take the chance and hope for luck, for it was a likely enough spot. So thither we stumbled, and schooled ourselves to the patience of stalking the last hundred yards, and reached the river unscathed. There we crouched, in painful alertness, with straining eyes and ears, while some diabolic night-bird piped a piercing note of fretful inquietude.

Till the souls of dead devils reincarnated in mosquito form drove us thence in a frenzy of impotence. We cursed them and the place and the armorplated hunter, and ran from there as fast as the night and the dead stumps and the thorn patches would allow.

And then we heard our hippo, deep and low out of the after dark, laughing at us.

"*Ho-ho-ho-ho ee-eeech ho-ho!*"

Sathanas himself deriding us out of the pit.

"*Awaie,*" opined the hunter wisely, "it is the *anu* of this water who speaks with *gumarè's* voice."

THE *anu* of that water seemed in all truth to be a powerful spirit and well disposed to hippos, for during all our stay at that lake never a hippo showed his nose above water. Not even the far, floating speck of nostril and ears that offers the most difficult shot in the world over heat-shimmery water. Though we scoured the lake surface with an eight-power Zeiss glass, we saw nothing. Not even once.

We fretted and cursed the unreliability of native rumor. We called ourselves fools for having come so far on an unsubstantiated story. Crafty and suspicious though an old bull hippo might be, he would have to come up to breathe sometime, somewhere. And surely there must be more than one hippo in the world. If water were favorable for the support of one, surely there must be others. Why could we see nothing?

Then came the excited yarn that our hippo had eaten up a horse. This was intriguing. Even a carnivorous outbreak might be expected of a hippopotamus that lived under the special protection of a strong water-spirit. But that was only the first telling of it. The story showed an immediate tendency to grow according to all the rules of African tradition, adding several feet to the size of the animal and a couple of native boys to the catastrophe. But with time and more than human patience, careful inquiry and sifting out of much shouting and chatter elicited a fairly coherent story. It seemed that farther still to the south another river flowed into this Abiata, from yet another lake known as the Hora-uitu, the "brackish water;" that in the Hora-uitu where white men never went, hippos lived in vast herds; and that our private hippo, the one we had come to shoot, had fled up this other river to join the herds there.

How did they know? Because a pair of frightened boys who had been watering their horses in the river and swimming with them had run screaming home to their village and had reported that, as the horses stood belly-deep in the water, a huge bull hippo had come surging up the river and had frightfully mauled an unfortunate horse that stood in its way, and the horse was surely going to die. This version remained fairly constant through cross-questioning, so that it seemed that something more or less like the story had really happened.

We, having set forth from afar to slay, were beginning to be gripped by the mighty hunter complex. Only blood can appease that complex—blood with its sequence of fiction about the length of the chase and of the size and the cunning and the ferocity of the ultimate victim.

Let me lay stress upon that word, "beginning." Only the preliminary stages of the complex dominated us. Blood we demanded. But we had not entered even upon the common fisherman stage of self-illusion. Splendid though it would have been and soothing to our sense of vanity, we couldn't fool ourselves—the most authentic-sounding native stories notwithstanding—that this fabled monster was all one and the same hippo that we were tracking down with relentless determination.

My own conviction is that natives—that is to say, the more or less savage dwellers of the bush and the jungle, whether they be African or Asian or South American—know infinitely less about the beasts that surround them than does the ordinarily observant white man. Their knowledge about the ways of animals is superstition and legend rather than fact, and their information about the whereabouts of game is always unreliable.

Only here and there a professional hunter can be met with who knows the beasts he hunts; and a good one knows his beast personally, by individual marking and name. Though at that I have had an expert Indian *shikari* tell me with utmost conviction of the dealings of sundry tigers with the local pot-bellied godlings and jungle imps.

In this matter of our hippo we had a naively simple native hunter who knew very little more than the slightly more simple village folk, who knew nothing at all. These tall spearmen were in many ways like the Zulus, a cattle-raising folk, more interested in their long-standing war with their neighbors of the hills, the Gouragis, and in their intertribal cow-rustling than in big game that, on account of their few old rifles and mud cartridges, they could regard as meat only in the luckiest circumstances.

I believe that, rather than the one hippo leaving its mark all across country by its ferocity, all the older bulls in this region were savage on account of having been stung every now and then by a heavy slug from the rickety old rifle of some hopeful taker of long chances. I believe, too, that my theory is borne out by the extraordinary shyness of all game throughout that Galla country.

The general impression of hippos is that they are great stupid beasts, so clumsy and helpless that it is hardly sportsmanlike to shoot them. But that impression quite certainly did not fit the beasts in this district. We had been out more than a week in their actual habitat and we had not even seen one, though tracks left in the mud overnight showed that they had been out and well inland—"to inspect our camp," the hunter said, "to see what kind of men we were who came to hunt." His opinion seemed to be, too, that they didn't think so very much of our potentialities, for otherwise they would have charged and stamped us flat.

However, single monster of ferocity or several, the complex was upon us and blood must be shed. So we decided to break camp and go on another day's trek to this Hora-uitu Lake to—we wished we might delude ourselves—to run down our quarry.

But that was a hunt to be postponed. Hunting other than for sport or blood vengeance was more urgent—meat! And in large quantities. The end of the Abyssinian Easter was upon us; and it is a fact difficult of credence that *nagadis*, close though they are to the beasts that perish, maintain a rigorous fast during the whole of what corresponds to our Lent. They will eat only bread, *anjera*—a sort of unleavened sourdough—and *shimbura*, horse grain, during that whole month; and they will travel on this fare.

But when the month of fast is over—wow! It is once again fact difficult of credence that one *nagadi* or boy will settle himself back and consume half a sheep in that twenty-four hours of holiday and feasting. It is also immemorial custom that on that day the master, Abyssinian or foreigner, must declare a holiday and provide meat to make it a worthy one, and, if humanly possible, to provide butter.

The latter was easy. The Gallas live almost entirely upon curdled milk and butter with that *anjera* stuff. This would sound like quite luxurious larder possibilities, but let it be considered how finicky we are in America about our dairy products. Gallas have their own prejudices and are just as "sot" about them.

To begin with, a cow must be milked into a gourd purified by smoke. Wood smoke will do—if one happens to be burning wood. But since wood, to be burned, must first be chopped up, and since cattle chips are plentiful and require no labor, wood fires are not frequent. And we all know, even in the most effetely sanitary modern apartment, what a fiendish affinity milk has for absorbing each separate delicate flavor out of a super-clean porcelain ice-box.

It might be supposed that a really energetic caravaneer, one who has not yet passed the limit of human exasperation and sunk into the hopless *laissez faire* of African trekking, might strike upon the happy thought of sitting around until some Galla decided to milk his cow and might then produce a nice aluminum pot and some backshish and thus acquire milk.

There have been such caravaneers. Foolish, impatient Americans who have thought to change primitive custom with common sense and the power of gold. They have lost their illusions and have become embittered cynics.

Under no circumstances will a Galla herdsman milk his cow into a "Frangi" pot. Nor into any pot other than a gourd that has been properly purified. Otherwise his cow will die. It will cease to give milk and will shrivel up and die.

They know it because their wise men have told them that this is so. And when the impatient American has given up trying to drink milk and has, in the course of time, simmered down his exasperation, he recognizes that the wise men are very wise indeed. For in just such manner did Moses lay down his hygienic law to his people.

This acrid smoke cure, then, quite probably has the effect of slaying the lesser bacteria which would otherwise infest a milk gourd that is just wiped out rather than washed, because water is scarce. But it doesn't prevent butter made of this purified milk from turning rancid when stored in a large earthen pot with a leaf over the top for a hermetic seal.

Gallas, however, like rancid, smoked-cured butter. They like it so well that they rub their bodies over with it as well as eat it in lumps. One stalwart youth appeared in our camp with the stuff plastered over his hair in thick gobs and beginning to melt and trickle down his shoulders and limbs. The explanation of this formality was:

"Oh, he wants to get married, so he has just killed his man back in the hills there and he has come to show off and to get a present."

So he got two mud cartridges and felt that it was well worth while to kill a man. I had it translated loudly that I would pay a dollar's worth of cartridges to any brave youth who would kill me one of our *nagadis*. But they thought I was only joking.

Upon an Easter holiday, however, past offenses must be forgiven; *nagadis* as well as camp boys must be fed. Both like butter, whether they can purloin it from master's table or scoop it out a Galla pot. Five more mud cartridges procured a smoked-blackened pot containing about two gallons of this sour mess. But meat was the question.

The local hunter assured us that hartebeeste and Grant's gazelle roamed in vast herds, "thick as cattle," and "just over there—just beyond that belt of thorn bush." So we saddled up, Jim and I, and took two extra pack-mules for all the meat and rode just beyond that belt— And continued riding for four hours before we saw the first sign of any beast other than cattle or goat.

It was an hour more after that that we suddenly flushed a pair of gazelles, a female and a young one, not fifty yards from us in fairly thick bush. But they saw us first and were up and off in a flash, going with the speed of those beasts that have only speed to rely upon for their protection from leopards and hunting-dogs, and with that extraordinary stiff-legged bounding gait that distinguishes Grant's.

Let some other mighty hunter who has the complex badly tell how he can snap up his rifle and shoot Grant's gazelle appearing and disappearing in red-brown streaks through patches of bush. I didn't even try. But Jim said wisely:

"Look, they're circling. They'll lead us to the herd."

So we followed on foot. And sure enough they did—in time. There was a herd of about twenty feeding quietly and traveling nicely up wind. Grant's are notoriously shy and difficult to shoot. But we made a stalk for which I take unblushing credit. Up to a hundred and fifty yards with a clear view. We picked our animals and fired. I heard Jim's voice say—

"Mine fell."

And I was so certain that I had a clear and steady bead that I didn't attempt another rear-end shot. I watched to see my buck fall too—and watched and watched, and had not even the satisfaction of seeing it lag behind the rest. And I had been talking to Jim about putting a dollar on the shot!

But Jim was magnanimous. All that he said was:

"One isn't nearly enough for that hungry gang. We'll probably get another chance. This is good country and there must be more."

So I gave up looking for blood tracks, and we spread out a little and tramped for another hour through thorn bush. A couple of hartebeeste saw us in good time; and, in a patch of moisture, something with long ears that might have been a reed buck. And then we saw Grant's again. I was closer, and I did not have the decency to let Jim come up with me, for he was one buck ahead. I started on my stalk.

Two hundred yards this time before they began to be uneasy and move off. So I found a quick rest over a low limb, picked my beast and pressed evenly and surely on the trigger. My victim departed as fast as any of them. But another buck, a good six feet away from it, jumped high in the air as if something had at least startled it. Jim, far behind me, said no word but started running in a diagonal direction toward the place where the herd would probably circle; and I was still looking for blood spoor when I heard his distant shot.

I hoped with all my heart that he had missed. But presently I heard his "Oo-oo-eeh!"—Jim is an ex-Australian—and then I hoped it would be a measly female.

But it wasn't. It was a fine buck with a pair of horns a good match for the first. Jim was still magnanimous. He said:

"It's that damn patent peep-sight of yours. I wouldn't have one of those damn things on any gun for a present. Give me a good old square open-sight."

It was in vain that I explained to him the lore of the modern peep-sight—that through a peep, one did not have to look for one's game over a black bar of iron and then center it; and at that, have half of it concealed by the bar; that one saw the whole of one's target through a thin circle whose proximity to the eye made a semi-transparent blur of it; that the orthoptic properties of the peep eliminated fifty per cent. of sun glare; that the human eye naturally and without effort sought the center of the blurred circle and that all one then had to do was to bring the front sight to bear on the desired point—as easy as aiming a shotgun.

But Jim would have none of it. An open sight for him, and results were the best arguments. We wrangled over it all the way back to camp. But what arguments could I produce against two bucks?

It was not till evening, when I was cleaning my rifle and debating upon whether to throw it into the lake or to make a more useful implement out of it—a kitchen poker—that I discovered one more of the bright little ways of the African boy.

This Lyman .48 sight has, in addition to the elevation adjustment, a windgauge adjustment reading to minutes of angle. One full revolution of the windgauge screw to one "point" as on the standard military rifle; and one quarter revolution, marked by a click against a spring tension, adjusts to one minute of angle, the system adopted by all modern expert riflemen—and by some mighty hunters. One minute of angle subtends one inch at a hundred yards; two inches at two hundred yards, and so on. There are ten points on the scale to either side of center; that is to say, forty minutes, or, reduced down to point of impact at two hundred yards, eighty inches.

Well, one of the gun boys at some time between the careful sighting in of the rifle and this first actual shooting with it, had noticed this nice little gadget on it, this pleasing screw that he could twiddle as he walked along. Accordingly, with monkey perseverance, he had twiddled until it went no farther, and then his mind had wandered off to a contemplation of nuts or juicy grubs or something, and so he had left it.

So that when I fired over a steady rest at my buck at two hundred yards range, my bullet went more than six feet to the left of the heart of that buck.

I could never find out which bright boy had done it, so I have not his tanned skin as a trophy. But that instituted my rule number one of trekking, even as the law of the Medes and Persians:

"Always carry your rifle yourself. No matter how hot it may be or how heavy the rifle grows with each extra hour, always carry it yourself. A gunboy, anyway, as has been witnessed by a thousand African hunters, is always somewhere else when you need him to the very urgency of life.

And since then I have always carried my rifle over my shoulder with a sling—in spite of the fact that slings always rattle when game is wariest. And I have grown a callous on my left shoulder thereby. But I have my gun when I want it.

All the same, I still wonder why I couldn't have been lucky enough to hit that other buck that jumped so high at two hundred yards.

TO THE bitter-water, Hora-uitu, the chase went; the long, stern chase after the beast that we would have liked to believe was fleeing before our determination; that we almost did believe, in fact, for there was just enough plausibility attached to the native assurances to make it quite possible.

The trail presently struck the river and followed it; and right there, as the native guide pointed out, were horses bathing belly-deep in the stream to prove the story. Probably the same group in the same place, we suggested to the native, and he assured us yes.

It was a good trail. Wide spaces of good grazing land with the Abyssinian minimum of thorn bush—which means scrub-trees not closer than thirty feet together; and another kind of tree at last, a thing of green leaves and a green fruit like an olive in shape and like hydrochloric acid in taste. But the natives eat them; so do monkeys and birds.

What swarms of birds! I had heard that Abyssinia was an ornithologist's paradise; but I had never understood that every bird was a new variety as well as a little darting rainbow of its own. Steeped in wonder and admiration of the Abyssinian birds, I have regretted that I am not an ornithologist. All the coloring that one has been accustomed to associating with parrots and humming birds, one sees in these birds.

I wept that I was as stupid as all the rest of us and could place only hawks and eagles and things; and orioles—at all events, birds that wove their nests and hung them upside down. There must have been a dozen different kinds of weavers, each with its different shape of nest, some as straggly and untidy as sparrows and some as neat as kindergartens.

And it was irresistibly noticeable that the neat ones belonged to correspondingly decorous builders; beautiful virtuous creatures that hung upside down in their doorways and chirruped to their innocuous mates who sat above. While the untidy nests belong to others as painted and fussy and loud and chattering as a chorus of the *Folies Bergères*.

But this pretty dicky-bird dissertation is out of place. We are mighty hunters thirsting to shed blood. The Hora-uitu turned out to be a magnificient piece of water, with shelving shores free for four and five miles at a stretch of that terrible papyrus swamp that is such a hopeless bar against all approach.

And on the shelving shore, close to the outflow of the river which was our hippo's highway, were great, round, three-toed tracks—many of them; some small enough to be mistaken for overtrodden cattle spoor, some as big as dessert plates. And one, fresh last night, a monster trail that would have done credit to a sizable elephant.

Here were hippos at last. It seemed as if this far lake was their sanctuary. Here surely would be our chance. We made camp a good mile from that place, so that no unseemly noises might disturb the wary beasts. We fired no shots at marauding vultures or at the jackals that began to slink around with sundown. And then with the dusk we took our rifles and two camp chairs and crept down to the beach. It would be, possibly, a long wait, but some time during that night the beasts would come out to feed. And then, if we waited, and did not lose our heads, and remained very still, that monster bull would surely come too.

A stiff breeze sprung up with the dark, quartering across the lake toward us. That was good—we permitted ourselves a whispered congratulation—for keen as was their sense of smell, they wouldn't get our scent. But the mosquitoes would —and did.

Gods of the chase, what droves of mosquitoes! We sat on sandy lake shore, but from the wet grass fringe behind us they rose in their waves—merciless emissaries of those jealous Red Gods to test our fortitude. And we set our teeth and stuck it out; took it sitting still. We dared not squirm or twist or slap, for we heard them moving out there in the dark, our hippos moving cautiously inshore.

One grunted somewhere with the ventriloquistic effect of sound close to the water's surface; another one answered. Quiet splashes indicated that bulky bodies were heaving themselves up into the shallows.

And then one laughed. The deep bass, satanic *ho-ho-ho-ee-eech-ho-ho* that we had heard once before. We wondered why. Then a long silence. Then splashing away to our right. The splashing grew in volume and continued. We let ourselves out and swore.

For to the right, where the splashing was, was the side from which the wind blew off shore toward the water; and was, moreover, on the *other* side of the river! And there the splashing stayed.

I have never understood this maneuver of hippos; nor have I ever seen it mentioned by any writer on big game. We could see nothing across there, for the sky was overcast and the moon was a late and a thin one. But we could hear plainly enough that many beasts were in shallow water, about knee depth, I should say, and that they apparently just stood and shuffled about. They were not walking in the shallows, for the noise remained in one place. Nor were they feeding there in a group, for later investigation showed that to be a clean sand bottom bare of reeds or lily roots or anything edible.

There was plenty of fodder farther inshore—grass and equicetum reed—but that was all well out of the water. This splashing in the one place continued for about two hours and then gradually receded along the shore, *away* from us.

Then we went back to camp and believed everything we had heard about *anu* spooks.

We soothed our mosquito lacerations—they were more than bites—and told each other grimly that there would be another night tomorrow.

We had a boat, a novel invention called an "Airaft," which in fact it was—a vast automobile tire built oblong and with a bottom sewn in. One blew it up with a pump and, presto, there was a shallow-draft, bone-dry boat, easy to row or paddle and capable of carrying two men and a pile of baggage. The whole thing deflated, in its canvas bag, measured about fourteen inches by ten by six and weighed about eleven pounds—quite the most efficient thing of its kind I have ever seen.

We grinned as we inflated this boat the next evening and quietly paddled across the river. If those *anu*-protected hippos preferred that shore for their dance we would be waiting for them. We were prepared to find that the potent "gaurodian" spirits would see to it that the night would be dark again; and we took along modern white man's inventions that these *anus* would not know about.

Jim had one of those "Justrite" hunters' lamps, a carbide-burner that was attached to the peak of a cap, something like a miner's light, and ignited by a spark from a flint and little wheel like a cigar-lighter. No matches to fumble with there; silence and sudden would be the shaft of bright white light. I, to be prepared in the event of separation, lashed a flashlight to the forearm of my rifle, where I could press my thumb on the button with rifle held to shoulder, and could see my front sight to perfection. We tested both our cunning devices and grinned at each other again.

This night there was no wind. Good again. Anything rather than an offshore wind, though that made no difference to the mosquitoes. Once again we paid the price that the Red Gods demanded, and we wondered, as we thought of malaria, that the white man's craft had not yet devised some bug-deterrent of less pungent and all-pervading odor than oil of pennyroyal or citronella.

Our reward came—in the course of time. Let it be remembered that we had to take up our positions behind bushes before dark and remain there without moving till the wily beasts should decide to come ashore. But they came along at last. Gruntings and vast breathings and low calls sounded from the lake. Questions to one another and doubtful assurances that everything seemed to be all right. Then faint splashings. It was amazing how silent such great beasts could be.

This night they didn't dance in the shallows. We had hoped they would. With that noise going on, we might have walked out and come who knows how close. This time they came out to feed. Softly, one by one, they heaved out of the deeps and came ashore. By bending low, we could just distinguish dim bulks against the faint sheen of the water, and then the blackness of the shore blotted them out again.

Presently we could hear squelchings in the soft mud behind us and scrunchings as of mowing-machines. They were all around us, somewhere in the dark. I remembered all the stories I had read of the potential savagery of these beasts when trapped at a disadvantage on shore; all the authentic accounts of their attacks upon boats and occasionally upon keepers in zoos; all the tales that the Gallas had told of the ferocity of these particular brutes and their patent fear of them, born of experience; and I felt a tingling up and down my spine. And then Jim helped to cheer the occasion by pressing his lips to my ear and breathing—

"My gosh, if one of them gets scared and starts for the water he'll run right over us like a steamroller!"

We decided mutually and without telling each other that it would be better to move out nearer to the water where the open sand strip would leave room to dodge. We crept out, one foot feeling the way for the next. A splash directly ahead arrested us. We froze. Straining our eyes, we made out a shadow looming in front, a thickening of the blackness against the less black water; an immensity doubled in size by the hanging night-mist. And not thirty feet away!

I heard the faint drip of water as Jim turned it on into the carbide. In a second I caught the odor of the gas. *Scrape,* went the spark wheel, and *scrape* again. The black immensity snorted.

"What the hell!" I heard Jim's infuriated mutter.

*Scrape* once more.

*Scrape-scrape-scr-r-rape!* Damn! Not a light!

And here I hesitated to record the blank truth, for it is not reasonably credible. We had tested that light in the afternoon. It had worked perfectly. We had cleaned it and put in a new load. And now, at this last critical moment, it refused to function. The thing, taken alone, is on the verge of excusable disbelief. But rank impossibility must be piled upon the incredible. I raised my rifle and pressed the button of my flashlight. Blackness! Not a glimmer. Not a glow. Darkness as dead as Topheth!

And there the bulk snorted in front of us.

"Hell!" I shouted. "Shoot blind, Jim!"

And we did. Both together, by the feel of our guns at our shoulders.

Who knows whether we hit anything? Probably we didn't. And even if we did, we carried no elephant guns that might hit heavy game almost anywhere and stop it. All I know is that the brute before us snorted once and then was gone in a surge of splashing like a locomotive through a washout.

In another second the soggy ground quaked all about us, as at the snorting rush of steamrollers plunging down grade to the deeps. And we, so far from dodging, we stood frozen and quaked with the ground.

The hurtling splashing was a roar of waters. It receded; its waves came back and lapped up and down the beach. They died away. The black lake surface became silent. And then from out of the black silence—

"*Ho-ho-ho-ee-eech ho-ho-ho-ho!*"

And further out again—

"*Ee-eech-hoh-hoh-hoh!*"

And that is the plain unbelievable truth exactly as it happened.

No, it was not just ill luck. It was not the cussedness of inanimate objects. It was not the dampness of night moisture collecting upon batteries or upon metal hot from the day's sun.

It was the *anu* spirits of that Galla lake.

I am convinced that *anu* spooks are live, malignant existences. If we had stayed there any longer I'm sure I could have surprized one some day and photographed it.

But we didn't stay. The chance of shooting a hippo there after that fiasco was minus nil to the n'th power. And the Gallas, who knew about all these things, came and told us that all those hippos, and particularly our savage bull, would forthwith make a long night trek, twenty miles overland, back to the first lake, to Zwai of the papyrus swamps, where a European hunter of Addis Abeba had told us no hippo were.

So we broke laager and trekked too, disgusted enough and pig-headed enough to hunt for a way over a mountain where the Gallas said there was no way.

BUT THAT lake must go down in the record as forgiven on account of its birds. I can't leave it without some small comment on the birds. Waders and shore runners there were by the battalion and fleet. Anywhere else they would have been interesting enough in their own little comings and goings. But here they were small stuff. Here amateur attention was arrested by black and white ibises, pink flamingos and great white pelicans; and particularly by a splendid fish-eagle that perched all day with aimless patience on a low dead tree and screamed an anguished *wah-hiu-hiu* to a mate that never came.

But pelicans in their manifold maneuvers were the daily wonder. The immediate most noticeable thing about pelicans is that, while so flat and splay-footed and clumsy on land, the moment they take to the water they become graceful white yachts, maneuvering for a good start, should a human come too close; and on the wing they are smooth-gliding planes of power and elegance. Close over the surface of the water they will often fly, a long line of them—each one in the exact wake of the other and each with the same machine-like regularity of wing-beat. Three strong, unhurried sweeps and a long glide, five and a longer glide, each wing-tip on the down stroke just skimming the water and leaving a thin ripple behind. When that happens against the evening sun as the birds go home to roost, one gasps with the delight of it and weeps that cameras are, after all, such inadequate, monotonic machines.

Here let somebody rise and tell me about the newest F:1.9 lenses and "Ermanox" cameras and iso-chromo extra-rapid plates with color filters. But let him try to catch white birds and pearl gray water and black-green reed reflections against a pink sunset!

An apparent playtime of pelicans seems to be late afternoon when they fly high and circle like questing vultures. And then they have a trick of disappearing completely for minutes at a time and suddenly reappearing again—some queer effect of the low-lying light and shadow, but I've given up trying to explain it to myself. Strong glasses can pick them out, pale gray against a blue-gray sky; but to the naked eye they remain invisible, till they wheel and appear suddenly like a squadron of white aeroplanes at five thousand feet, banking steeply to descend in wide spirals, then zooming up again on a strong wind. Perhaps some *scientifico* knows why.

A flock of pelicans fishing is an example of cooperative labor that the natives could do worse than copy. Let these wise birds catch a school of small fry anywhere near the shore and they will collect like a herring fleet and quickly organize a drive. In a half circle, beating the water with their wings, they will bedevil their prey and drive them systematically into the shallows.

And then admiration of the pelican is lost in amazement at his greed and capacity. With hoarse croakings and undignified scufflings the birds literally fall upon their meal and engulf it in huge shovelfuls. I hope I don't exaggerate when I say that a big pelican's bill-pouch, working like a bucket-dredge, will scoop up four or five pounds of small fish. Follows a craning of the bill, an agonized straining of the rubbery neck, with eyes squeezed tight over the effort, and the whole mass is gone and the bird is ready to climb over the backs of its neighbors who have gotten ahead of it during the brief moment of stress, and to fall over their heads into the swirling mess for another scoopful. One should not watch pelicans feed.

Pink and white flamingos supply the humor of the water front. With their long, stiff legs and their necks stretched with head immersed to snuffle for fresh-water clams or algae, or whatever it is that they grub out of the mud shallows, they look like drunken tripods gone to sleep. I don't know whether anybody has ever had the patience to watch and find out for how long a flamingo can keep its head upside down under water.

Catching them in this position, the resurgent boy in a sober explorer is irresistibly impelled to creep up behind and throw stones at them, and then to fall back and scream with laughter at the look of injured wonder with which they withdraw their heads from the mud and twist their boneless necks round over their backs to see what this indecent disturbance is about.

Half a million pink flamingos flying low against a late amber sky are also a wonder and a delight to be remembered.

Ibises. What can one say about ibises, except that they are black as night and white as daylight, and are always graceful and unhurried and dignified? Watching them, one understands that Egyptians held them sacred.

It was regretfully that we left this good lake and climbed the sides of a low mountain so thickly strewn with volcanic tufa and a sort of black, razor-edged obsidian that mules had to pick their way and the boys with their naked feet were in sore trouble. It was as we mounted slowly and the view spread out beneath us that we began to form a conception of what a splendid lake this Hora-uitu really was.

Monotony of the long climb was avoided by keeping on expecting to find, just over the next ridge, one of the impassable clefts or ravines that the people of the hidden village assured us prevented further progress.

It was a curious, frightened sort of village. Surrounded by an unusually thick and high thorn fence, and nestling at the base of a cliff completely screened by thorn bush, one did not know there was a village there until one smelled it.

I suppose all African villages smell at greater or lesser range. Galla villages are not so bad when one has once adjusted one's mind to accept them—or when one has huddled under a thorn bush at close quarters to a well greased Galla hunter. It is a kind of faint, floating, garbagy-smoky-rancid-buttery smell.

The people of this hidden village, Jim thought, were either malefactors or runaway slaves; and for some obscure reason of their own they surely did not want us to go over that mountain. Possibly for nothing more definite than some vague idea that where white men once passed there would presently be a road, and their seclusion would thus be destroyed.

However, ridge lifted beyond ridge and valley led into glen, and never a cleft did we see that called for a detour of more than a couple of hundred yards. Good going it was, rather. Magnificent going, in fact, after thorn scrub. Here was fine upland grass and shade trees in considerable variety. More grazing to the half square mile than in a day's trek over the flat.

But—no water. Here in the hills were no hollows where even rainwater could collect. How deep must tree tap-roots go, I wonder, where the rain comes in spells of six months apart? And what do kudu and the various mountain buck and rock baboons drink when there are too many of them to lick the moisture that sometimes condenses on the shady under side of a rock?

Yet that afternoon, as if in answer to the question, it rained for the first time in six months. Sudden black clouds built themselves out of the white cumulous vapor that had been making such a succession of pictures against the ultramarine sky for the past weeks. A cold wind howled over the peaks from nowhere. And then rain in a whirl of fury. Heavy, stinging rain, as if to drown in spitefulness all the herbage that had waited for it so long.

*Nagadis* with pack mules, of course, were strung out anywhere over the last mile or so. Raincoats, of course, were in the packs—anywhere where the boys to whom they had been handed with strict orders to carry them had stuffed them. And as monkeys, when startled, lose what little minds they have and chatter in helpless fright, so camp boys, when faced with the master's just wrath, chatter and are enveloped in simian forgetfulness.

I do not know how many of the packs had to be unloaded before the raincoats were found; it doesn't matter. Suffice it that everything, including the contents of the opened packs, was very properly wet first. And yet the law of Abyssinia does not permit one to use boy's skin as impromptu rain-shelters.

That was the beginning of the "little rains." From now on rain might be expected any day for the next few days and every day for the next few weeks or so. Then there would be a lull of another two or three weeks, and then—RAIN. The "big rains." Four months of them. And from all accounts the word "big" is miserably inadequate.

Rain! There were rivers to be crossed before we should see the great metropolis again; and dry ravines which would presently be thirty-foot-deep rapids. It behooved us to hurry.

ALONG, long day over that mountain and a short one on the level brought us to the Zwai Lake again, where all our hippo had trekked overnight. But this time we were twenty miles across, on the opposite shore to where we had first seen it. Two exquisite little steep-sided islands, thickly clustered with neat huts, hugged the shore.

There was more population crowded on to these two little islands than over two days' trek on the open plain; and the reason was startlingly illustrative of the actual precariousness of life among this warlike folk. Islands were much more secure against sudden attack than were thorn fences.

Lakis, these people were; so called after their islands. They paddled out on frail cigar-shaped bundles of papyrus reeds to inspect this white camp that suddenly sprung up on their mainlaad; and they brought untold delicacies. Roasted wheat and fish and fowl and native beer. A nice friendly people!

"*Gumaré*—hippos?" we asked them doubtfully.

"Oh yes," they astounded us by replying. "Away out there."

We brought the glasses to bear on the tiny, half-submerged island that lay perhaps a couple of miles offshore. And—our voices dropped to unconscious caution—it was true. A whole herd of pinky-browny hippos lying all over each other on a sand shallow.

"Yes, the *gumaré* came and they went," the islanders told us. "Sometimes they were there and sometimes they were not. These had just come. But they were very fierce and they attacked boats that went out at dusk; and one old bull in particular—"

At that we shut them up. We had heard all these local legends about coming and going and about ferocious old bulls in particular. We had been chasing this particular fairy story over the whole lake region. The only point that interested us was whether these islanders would for a backshish take us out in their reed floats close enough to these ferocious monsters to get a shot at them?

There was all the demur we expected. Those *gumaré* were very fierce; and it was true, by their fathers' spirits, that they would rush at boats and crunch them like eggshells; and that old slate-gray bull—etc., etc., *ad nauseam.*

Any discussion with African natives must be an affair of hours. This one tired out our patience to the point of murder. How long would hippo stand in broad daylight view while we argued? But nothing would move those Lakis. They would not under any circumstances go out so far from shore to attack *gumaré*. But, if we would wait, toward late afternoon, just before the dreaded dusk, the *gumaré* would probably begin to move closer in preparation for going out to feed at a favored place of old which was now rich with untrampled grass. If we would wait till that short remnant of daylight, for a backshish of one dollar apiece, a small fleet of them would take us out; but not farther than their own islands.

We — I in particular — fumed and stamped up and down the beach. Hippos cautiously swimming inshore would offer no more than the difficult snapshot at the thin wedge between nose and ears as they came up to snort a breath before sinking again. And a snapshot from a frail unstable reed float at that! I tried to hire a reed raft myself—I could use a double paddle as well as they did—to buy one, even. But an idea so new to the African mind would require two days and a consultation of the village elders to consider.

Wait we had to—and I spent all of the time seeing that my rifle was clean and oiled and that the sight adjustments were exactly, to the minutest fraction of an inch, where they should be.

A Joshua delayed that afternoon. But it did begin to grow late at last; and anxious glasses showed that the pinky-browny island was slowly disintegrating. Bits broke off it and quietly disappeared. It dwindled; and presently it was all gone.

Where now were all the brave men who would man the fleet? They were not so many as had at first talked about it. But the usual epithets of scorn—"women, little children"—and silver dollars displayed aroused a certain response, with much hesitation and much more telling to each other of the Laki equivalent for "Let George do it." And after weighing the dollars in their hands to make sure that they were real and fat ones, a small fleet of six reed rafts prepared to go out.

And it was high time. Narrow wedges of slate-gray began to show for seconds at a time and to disappear with a *pfoof* under a spray of vapor. They were within the outer edge of the islands. In another half-hour the dusk would begin to creep over the water; and then nothing would drive the fleet to sea.

But delay, even in Africa, must come to an end. We nearly exploded with impatience, but we did get away. The biggest of the reed boats was barely big enough to float two men. One did not sit in such a thing, of course; there was no concavity to sit in. One sat on it, rather, semi-submerged in the water, and kept one's balance by paddling with one's feet.

And then the village humorist, from

safe ashore, called that sometimes crocodiles sneaked up under reed rafts and bit people's legs off. I am prepared to take oath that I did not spasmodically jerk my legs out of the crawly wet—proof of which is that the boat did not immediately roll over. Besides, I was too intent upon watching a great gray wedge that was intent upon watching us, and which did not seem to be half as nervous about the boats as the boats were about it.

Other, smaller wedges showed from time to time. But it was this big, dark gray one that I wanted to come close to. This surely must be the fabled ferocious bull, or any other bull—I didn't care. As long as it was a big one, I promised myself that I would believe every one of the stories that the natives would tell about how that individual *gumaré* had eaten reed boats whole with full cargoes of lovely kings' daughters.

But come close the fleet would not. A hundred yards away those stout boatmen remained, and would approach no closer. Whether the tales about the ferocity of this beast, or of one like it, were true or no, there was no doubt about the islanders' fear of it. Every time it would snort and blow a spray, they would hurriedly back-paddle. Every time it would submerge there would be a scurry.

"It will swim below water and heave up under a boat," they insisted, "and then where would we all be?"

"In the soup," remarked Jim cheerfully.

But it did seem to be true. The thing came distinctly closer each time it submerged. How close to where the boats had been before they fled it was difficult to judge, but certainly closer.

"Take a chance, Mac," Jim began to urge me. I had the heavier gun. "Take a shot the next time it lifts its head and looks. It's not getting any lighter, and these fellows won't stay out much longer."

But I swore that I'd be damned if I'd shoot at a smear of gray in the water a hundred yards away, out of a rolling log that heaved with each dip of the paddle. Particularly not since my boatman paddled all the time and since most of the time he kept the boat's nose slanted for a quick turn and run and I had to twist myself more than half around even to see the beast. What, fire one shot and then trek over the rest of Africa to get another chance?

No, I wanted at least a reasonable hope of getting a sight on that vanishing wedge. At the limit of exasperation I got my boatman to understand that he was to cease paddling when that slice of nose and forehead appeared, and that he was to sit still and not wiggle his toes or blink his eyes.

And when, after a dozen more attempts the man was beginning to be drilled into it, the beast executed a maneuver that nearly ruined the whole hunt. It had been watching us and blowing angrily through its nose for quite a long stretch of seconds. My shoulder and left arm ached from holding my rifle at the aim and hoping to catch a moment of steadiness. Then suddenly the beast gave a snort and heaved itself half out of the water. Like a great gray whale-back it looked; and with a vast splash it dived.

Then there was a panic. Those heavy, water-logged reed rafts might have competed in a canoe race. That was the last sign, the men yammered. The big brute was now infuriated and was after us in earnest. Had those things been light canoes, the men would never have stopped before they beached them high ashore. It was only when muscle and wind gave out that we were able to make them hear that no submarine torpedo was on its way to us. There was the pursuing wedge in sight again on the surface.

Whatever might have been the emptiness at the pit of my stomach during that frenzied minute of flight, I can't believe now that the brute had started on so spectacular an attack. I don't attempt to explain why the great brute suddenly jumped like that; but I give it credit for more wiliness than that. I have heard of, and I can understand, a hippo's being infuriated to the point of rushing open-jawed upon a boat. But I feel sure that if this brute had wanted to dive under and engulf a boat from beneath it would surely have quietly sunk and made its attack from the security of under water.

Anyway, the thing had not chased us—at all events not very far, for there it was again, snorting and blowing spray and looking directly towards us. But it was nearer. Much nearer than those wary paddle-men had let it come before. Perhaps up to seventy-five yards.

And then suddenly came my chance, as chances do sometimes if one waits long enough. The boat was momentarily steady. The great gray head was slightly lifted. My sights swung into line.

Dusk was upon us. If I let this chance go I would surely not get another that day. And would we ever persuade the men out again after their panic?

I fired.

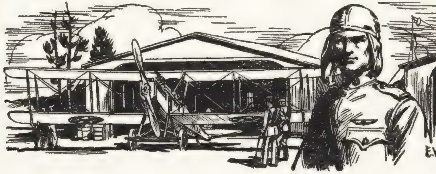
*Smack*, was the instant crack of the bullet on hard bone. The huge head heaved up; the shoulders rose sluggishly high of the water; then rolled over sidewise and disappeared under.

"By golly, you got him!" shouted Jim. "I saw the splash where you hit! Fair in the center of the forehead! Come on home to supper. He'll be floating in twenty-four hours."

So the long hunt was ended. I don't know how much I ought to believe about the individuality of this ferocious man-eating hippo. Probably nothing; possibly a little. Native yarns are sometimes amazingly true. I do, however, believe now in the unusual savageness of the generality of the hippos of that lake region.

But I promised myself I would believe all the stories that the natives would tell about this particular hippo. I must. For I have made myself another mental promise—to bring back to each appreciative editor of the *Adventure* staff a cane made of hippo hide with a hippo ivory top.

*An air pilot and the field of broken wings*



# The Lucky Little Stiff

### By H. P. S. GREENE

FRANCE. Mud. A khaki-clad column of fours slogging along to the rhythm of their own muttered but heart-felt blasphemy—a common enough sight in the winter of 1917-1918.

But in one particular this procession of sufferers was unique. On the shoulders of each performer shone bright silver bars, and their more or less manly chests were spanned by Sam Browne belts. A casual observer would have taken them for officers. But no, on each breast was a pair of silver wings, and their uniforms were of well-fitting but variously designed whipcord. The pot-bellied little person in the indecently short yellow serge blouse who led them was an officer; his followers were flying lieutenants.

They were a part of the personnel-in-training of the great American aviation field of Issy-la-Boue, the advance guard of the ten thousand American bombing planes which publicity agents said were going to blast the Huns out of Berlin.

The column passed between two long barracks, one of which, filled to capacity with double-decker bunks, yawned thru an unfinished open end.

"Squads right!" shrilled the pot-bellied one with the captain's bars in a startling tremolo. "Heh!"

The men behind squads-righted in a dispirited fashion and came to a halt in straggling lines. The squawky voice continued:

"I want to say that you are the most undisciplined body of men I ever saw. That—er—mêlée you staged when you were unwittingly marched into—er—contact with a body of enlisted men was the most disgraceful exhibition on the part of officers so-called I ever saw in my life. I—er—want to say you are a disgrace to the service. That's all I want to say. Oh, I—er—believe Lieutenant Crosby has something to say to you."

Flying-Lieutenant Crosby stepped forward and cleared his throat. He was a born Babbitt, a destined getter-together.

"Men," he began, and then hesitated.

Perhaps he should have said "officers," but that wouldn't have sounded right either. He rushed on, "I want to remind you that Happy's and Sam's funeral is this afternoon. All flying is called off as usual. There wasn't much of a crowd out for poor old Bill yesterday. I know it's a long walk and all that but we want to get a good crowd out this afternoon. The cadets are going to try to get a good crowd out for their fellow who got bumped, and we want to get a good crowd out too. That's all I wanted to say."

He retired to the ranks. The fat officer shouted "Dismissed!" Then he changed his mind.

"As you were. The commanding officer wanted me to announce that quarantine to the post is on again until the perpetrator of the outrage of stopping the Paris Express has been discovered and punished. Dismissed!"

The half-broken ranks scattered in the direction of their barracks. Toward the one with the unfinished end went three oddly dissimilar figures. They were always together, and of course some one had already thought of calling them "The Three Musketeers."

One was short, dark and slim, with pathetic eyes and a dispirited mustache. Another was tall and lathy, with a long lugubrious countenance. The third was blond and almost corpulent.

"I knew it, Tommy, I knew it," said the tall man. "How come you and 'Fat' to pull such a stunt, anyway? Ain't such a joke now, is it? What're you going to do about it?"

The three entered their barrack and sat down on a bunk near the open end, well away from the crowd huddled around the stove in the middle. The little man gazed sadly before him.

His mustache drooped dolefully. Some observant person had remarked that he could read Tommy by his mustache. When it was freshly waxed and pert, he was just going on a party. When it was sorry and unkempt, he had just been on one.

"You know we didn't mean any harm," he said. "All that stuff the frogs put out about our trying to wreck the train was a dish of prunes. As if it wasn't bad enough to miss the truck and walk out here twelve miles from town without having all this on top of it. When the quarantine for the itch was taken off, and Fat and I got those "thirty-six hours on condition you don't go to Paris" passes, we got by the M. P.'s at the *gare* in Paris all right.

"We went out through the baggage-room. I wasn't in the Ambulance for nothing. We came back into the station the same way, and once we got on the train we went right to sleep. They sure do put up a good champagne cocktail at Henry's, and then all those beers at the Follies!

"Well, when I woke up we were at a station. I looked out and the sign on it said Chateauroux. I knew where we were all right because I've flown over the place. We'd passed Issy. So I woke Fat up and pulled him off the train. There was another train standing in the station, and I asked a frog where it went to and he said it was the Paris Express. So I knew it would take us back to Issy again, and we hopped on.

"We got into a third class compartment with a lot of *poilus*, and they had *beaucoup* red wine, and we drank to *la belle France*, and *les-États-Unis*, and when I woke up again the train was just leaving a station, and the sign said Issy-la-Boue. By the time I realized what it all meant we were going too fast to jump off, so I pulled that handle on the wall, and the train stopped.

"When we saw how wrought up the frogs were, we beat it. No wonder we had to come over and help them win the war, if they're all as bum shots as those birds were! Guess they thought we were bandits or spies or something. Well, we had to walk home to keep from being A. W. O. Loose from roll-call this morning, and never got home till four o'clock. Suppose after flying, I'll have to go over and 'fess up to Herman, or you birds will never get any more passes. But I know I'll never get one if I stay here for the duration of the war."

"No pass ain't *nothin'* to what you'll get, boy!" said "Long John." "Shot at sunrise, is my bet. But I admire your self-sacrificin' spirit."

"Never mind, we'll take our medicine, won't we, Fat? And if I don't mention you, maybe he won't say anything about it."

Fat grunted dolefully. Outside a bugle blew. The three rose to go.

"It's me and Tommy to fly the eighteen meters," said Long John. "Where do you go, Fat?"

"Machine-gun," was the answer.

"Hum, too bad. I heard the guy they shot there last week croaked. The bullet went right thru his leg, and the quack dressed the place where it went in all right, but forgot to see if it came out. Gangrene set in and his leg rotted off, and they had to shoot him. Now a feller your build—say, it wouldn't go through at all. Just stay there and fester—"

But his victim was gone.

TOMMY flew badly that morning. He was all in, his head ached and, besides, he was worrying about that interview with Major Herman Krause. And then he had to practise landings—nervous work at best in an unfamiliar ship. Finally he blew a tire and was bawled out unmercifully by the instructor.

Luckily it was on his tenth and last trip, and he breathed a sigh of relief when the lecture was over and he could go. He went to the barracks and policed up. Shave, shine, but no shampoo. There was hardly enough water for drinking and shaving, and that was brought many miles in tank wagons. Bathing was something one went without at Issy—and felt not much the worse unless the scabbies set in.

Once militarily clean, Tommy dragged himself to headquarters, entirely ruining the new shine so painfully acquired. He entered the presence of the adjutant feeling like a whipped schoolboy. He saluted and stood at attention.

"Sir, Lieutenant Lang to speak to the commanding officer."

The adjutant kept on writing for about five minutes at a desk stacked with piles of reports. Then he looked up savagely and spoke with a slight accent:

"What? Oh, yes. What for?"

"About the Paris Express."

"Go right in. He's waiting."

Tommy went in and stood with trembling knees before the C. O. He was a large florid man with beetling brows and his manner was not encouraging.

"You? Well? What about it?"

Tommy explained as well as he could, stressing his innocence. He thought his plea must have softened an executioner, but Major Krause was uncompromising in attitude and words.

"Young man," he said, "you are a disgrace, sir! A disgrace to the United States Army!" Tommy thought he had heard those words before. "We have been having considerable trouble with the guard. Those cadets are the worst disciplined body of men I ever saw." Again a familiar note.

"As for you—you seem to have trouble keeping awake. A permanent assignment as commander of the guard ought to give you beneficial practise at it. Of course, after keeping awake all night, you will need to sleep in the day-time. You are therefore relieved from flying duty. Report at guard mount this evening and every evening until further orders. That will do."

Tommy saluted and went out, his heart sinking. There were only three known ways of getting out of Issy-la-Boue. The first was to break your neck. The second was to fly so well that you were graduated. The third was to fly so poorly that you were sent to Blooey for reclassification, probably as an armament officer. Which was generally considered the lowest form of life so far discovered in the air service.

All these methods were dependent on flying. Once a man was taken off flying duty, it took an act of Congress to get him away from the place.

The little man wended his way back to the barracks. His comrades were sitting on their bunks, and he poured his tale of woe into their receptive ears. Being beyond words, they accorded him silent sympathy. Finally Fat spoke:

"Well, I'm lucky to be out of it. Say, did you hear the news? Brock was washed out on the fifteens this morning."

"That makes seven in a week," said Tommy after a pause. "How'd it happen?"

"Same old thing. Wings came off."

A bugle called. Most of the flying lieutenants went outside and, joining others from near-by barracks, formed in line. A few commands, and they were in one of the rivers of mud which served as roads at the field. Presently they were halted behind three long two-wheeled pushcarts; each cart bore a long box covered with an American flag. The mourners stood in the mud for half an hour waiting, and then a dispirited looking band appeared. Its bass drum echoed *boom-boom-boom-boom-boom,* and the procession started.

Through the gate of the camp it went, and out on to the main road, while the drum kept up its sad, hollow sound. Yard after yard, rod after rod, until the cortège had walked two miles. Then it turned into a young but flourishing cemetery, with red, raw mounds in orderly lines.

The men were formed around three fresh graves. A pale-faced Y. M. C. A. man stumbled through the burial service. A red-faced Knight of Columbus did likewise. A Frenchman flew over and dropped some dessicated roses. Then they all marched away again; only the boxes and a small burial party remained behind.

The band struggled with its one tune, a lively quickstep, according to regulations. Two old peasants drew their cart to one side of the road to let them pass.

"*Comme ils sont trists, les 'tits Americains!*" said the woman.

"*Quelle musique!*" answered her spouse.

THE THREE chums went back to their bunks.

"Do you birds know anything about being the commander of the guard?" asked Tommy with some concern.

"No," replied Fat.

"Sure," answered Long John. "I was chucked out of the first training camp. First, you have to have a gun."

"A rifle?" asked Tommy.

"No, you little sap. Officers don't carry rifles, or flying lieutenants either. A pistol."

"But I ain't got a pistol."

"Borrow one then. Do you know the general orders?"

"I don't know any generals, orders or debility either."

"Never mind trying to be funny. You may find out it ain't no joke about generals. The Old Boy himself and the Silly Civilian are going to inspect the post tomorrow. I saw the orders over at the operations office for every machine to be up that can get off the ground. I suppose that means a lot more long walks. But it's most time for guard mount; you'd better run along and find a gun."

Tommy disappeared and finally returned with a regulation web belt and holster in one hand, and a .25 caliber automatic in the other.

"What are you going to do with that popgun, you idiot?" asked Long John disgustedly. "Are you going hunting canary birds, or what?"

"I couldn't find a regular gun, and a cadet loaned me this. He said officers had taken it before and put a dirty sock or something in the holster so the butt would just show, and got by all right."

"Very well, then, take one of Fat's socks. The smell may keep you awake. Is the blamed thing loaded? Look out you don't shoot yourself. There's the call, now. Put on your belt. You fool! How many belts are you going to wear? What do you think you are, a past grand master of the Holy Jumpers? Take off your Sam Browne. There—get going, now.

"Well, away he goes, and he doesn't know whether Julius Cæsar was stabbed or shot off horseback. Did you ever see the like, Fat? But I bet he comes out all right some way, the lucky little stiff. I never knew it to fail. Well, let's go up by the stove."

But Tommy wasn't such a complete fool as he appeared. He knew the old Army advice for shavetails, "Find a good sergeant and stick to him." The sergeant of the guard was a grizzled old sufferer who had been through it all many, many times. He engineered the guard mount and posted the guard. Then Tommy drew him to one side.

"What do I do now, Sergeant?" he asked.

"Well, the lieutenant has to inspect the guard three times, once between midnight and six o'clock in the morning. First ask them for their special orders, and then for their general orders. If they make a mistake, I'll nudge you and you say, 'Correct him, Sergeant,' and I'll fix him up. It's getting dark now. Would the Lieutenant like to make his first inspection before supper?"

Inspection was a hectic affair. The guard was composed of cadets who had joined the Army to fly and remained in it to mount guard, and it was their intention to make it as interesting as possible for all concerned, especially their superiors. But the old sergeant was equal to the occasion. He steered Tommy by the traps planted for him, and then showed him the guardhouse.

There the commander of the guard ate his slum and then returned to his barrack. Long John grabbed him by the arm as he entered.

"That frog was around again today, and he brought a lot of stuff," he whispered. "You're in on it. Doc is goin' to make punch. Be around at nine o'clock."

TOMMY was there at the appointed time. At the far end a crowd was gathered. Men were perched as closely as possible on the double-deck bunks. In their midst Bacchanalian rites were in progress. "Doc," a stout man with a red, satyr-like countenance, was beating a huge bowl of eggs. Before him within easy reach and frequently applied, was an assorted row of bottles. Tommy read some of the labels—Cherry Brandy, Martell, D. O. M., Absinthe.

"My God," he muttered to himself, "everything but nitroglycerine."

The party was undoubtedly a success. There were songs and dances and stories. Finally it got to the speechmaking stage. An interruption in the form of a volley of shots was welcome to every one except the current performer. A trampling of feet, and then more shots followed. A voice at the other end of the barrack shouted "Attention!" as Major Krause stumbled in. He had evidently been running, but he tried to stalk around in a dignified manner. Somebody whispered—

"Those damn cadets have been shooting off their guns and raising hell again, and he's been trying to catch them."

The major approached the end of the barrack where the party had been in progress. He sniffed suspiciously, but the punch-bowl had been shoved under a bunk and the bottles into boots, and there was no evidence in sight. Finally he asked—

"Are there any guns in this barrack?"

"No," Tommy spoke up. "I know, because I was trying to borrow one this afternoon to mount guard with."

A partially suppressed titter rose and fell again. The C. O. wheeled around furiously.

"So it's you again, is it?" he thundered. "Carousing in here while your superiors attend to your duties. Get out to your guard and put a stop to that indiscriminate shooting. I swear if I see you again tonight I'll prefer charges and have you broke!"

Tommy stumbled out into the darkness and headed in what he thought was the direction of the guardhouse. His head was buzzing painfully. A volley of shots sounded somewhere in front of him. He felt vaguely that he ought to do something about it, and ran in that direction, only to fall over the guy-rope of a hangar and fall heavily. More shots behind him. He got up and staggered on. Suddenly there was a flash and a report right before him. Then a voice yelled—

"Halt."

"Commander of the guard," bawled Tommy.

A dark figure loomed up vaguely in the murk. He struck a match and saw a grinning cadet working the bolt of his rifle and waving the muzzle around dangerously. Suddenly it exploded and Tommy felt mud splatter over him.

"I thought I saw something moving and halted it, and it wouldn't halt, so I fired, but I don't understand this gun very well, sir," said the cadet, still working at the bolt.

The commander of the guard turned and fled. He was getting dizzier every minute. Finally he tripped over another guy-rope and fell, to rise no more.

When he woke, it was with the consciousness of having been annoyed for a long time by a rasping noise which was still going on. He tried to pull himself together and think. He could vaguely discern the bulk of a hangar. There was a queer, unexplained rasping. Filed wires— Wings coming off— Funerals—

The noise stopped, and presently a dark figure crept out through the hangar door and started to steal away. Tommy drew the little automatic from its holster and fired. The next thing he realized was that there were flashlights and men everywhere. The sergeant of the guard. Major Krause. Calls for explanation. Tommy tried to explain. A voice said—

"You fool, you've shot the adjutant!"

Strong hands seized him and hustled him away.

NEXT morning, when a detail came to the guardhouse, Tommy was still in a daze. The leader told him to police up, as he was to go before the C. O. He was still confused when he was led into the office at headquarters.

The commanding officer was there, and Captain La Croix, the French officer who advised as to instruction. Also a large, fierce man with stars on his shoulders, and a little civilian with glasses and a trench coat several sizes too large for him. Tommy's legs seemed to be made of butter.

Major Krause was speaking, and strange to say, his voice was not unkind.

"Lieutenant Lang," he said, "I revoke everything I said yesterday. You have done a great service for your country. I regret to say that a small file was found on the body of the adjutant, and that some of the ships were found to have been tampered with—so skillfully that detection was very unlikely. Inspection of the adjutant's papers brought out evidence that he was an Austrian citizen. Tell the general and the secretary how you came to discover what was going on."

"Well," blurted Tommy, "it was this way. I was dizzy and fell down two or three times and finally I decided to go to sleep. Then some guy kept making a filing noise and waking me up, so I shot him."

THAT evening three flying lieutenants were finishing an illicit meal of chicken and champagne at a little French inn about three miles from the field, and the smallest of the trio was finishing a story.

"There was a long argument," he said, "and the general and the major were all for preferring charges, but Captain La Croix stood up for me and said I was a good pilot, and finally they agreed to let him get me transferred to a French observation squadron at the front."

The tall man and the fat one looked at each other and at their little companion. Then they ejaculated as one—

"You lucky little stiff!"

# A Hangtown Bill of Fare

### BY JOHN L. CONSIDINE

THE NICKNAME, "Hangtown," bestowed upon the town of Placerville, California, in its infant days, survives chiefly on the menu cards of San Francisco restaurants, where, among the various forms of serving oysters, may be found the phrase "Hangtown Fry."

The originator of the Hangtown Fry was probably M. Elstner, who conducted the El Dorado Hotel at that place in its earliest days and who got out the first menu card ever issued in Hangtown. That was before the oyster made its appearance in the camp. From more than one point of view it should prove of interest. It read as follows:

**HANGTOWN BILL OF FARE**
El Dorado Hotel
Hangtown, January, 1850

*ENTREES*

| | |
|---|---|
| Sauer kraut | $1.00 |
| Bacon, fried, | 1.00 |
| “ stuffed, | 1.00 |
| Hash, low grade, | .75 |
| “ 18 carats, | 1.00 |

*ROAST*

| | |
|---|---|
| Beef, wild (prime cut) | 1.50 |
| “ up along | 1.00 |
| “ a la mode (plain) | 1.00 |
| “ with one potato (fair size) | 1.25 |
| “ tame, from Arkansas | 1.50 |

*PASTRY*

| | |
|---|---|
| Rice pudding, plain, | .75 |
| “ “ with molasses, | 1.00 |
| Rice, with brandy peaches, | 2.00 |
| Square meal with dessert, | 3.00 |

*SOUP*

| | |
|---|---|
| Bean | $1.00 |
| Ox-tail (short) | 1.50 |

*GAME*

| | |
|---|---|
| Codfish balls, per pair, | .75 |
| Grizzly roast | 1.00 |
| “ fried | .75 |
| Jackass rabbit (whole) | 1.50 |

*VEGETABLES*

| | |
|---|---|
| Baked beans, plain | .75 |
| “ “ greased, | 1.00 |
| Two potatoes, (medium sized) | .50 |
| Two potatoes, peeled, | .75 |

**PAYABLE IN ADVANCE.**
**GOLD SCALES ON THE END OF BAR.**

High prices were not confined to the restaurateurs. Other business men exacted them. The fees of professional men were in accordance. The physicians charged an ounce—about $16—a visit. One of them won his "stake" through an odd bequest.

A successful gambler of Placerville was Mary Johnson, but she was not known by that name; for she went in man's attire and her sex was unsuspected. She was stricken with a fatal illness and this physician was called. He recognized her as the sweetheart he had left in Vermont when, infected with the gold fever, he struck out for California. She had amassed a fortune faster than he. By her will, found in a little box under her pillow when she died, she left him $20,000.

# *Old Father of Waters*

## GOING ON WITH

## *ALAN LEMAY'S novel of stirring pre-Civil War days on the Mississippi*

SINGED and burned, Captain Arnold Huston stood amid the crowd that packed the bluff and watched the last pennons of flame and the billowing cotton smoke that emanated from what had been the Mississippi steamboat *Peter Swain.* In that veteran sternwheeler the last wealth of the Hustons had taken to the treacherous, coffee-colored waters. So Huston went back to Natchez, to the old plantation house where he was born; it was now bleak and untenanted, but as he approached he heard a shot within and, investigating, found his cousin Will Huston prowling about. Will informed Arnold that he had foreclosed on the property and it now belonged to him. Words led to anger, and Arnold struck Will, who demanded satisfaction with pistols.

For a second Arnold chose a suave young gentleman, by name Mark Wallace, who first tried ineffectually to dissuade him from going through with the duel and then conducted him, still suffering acutely from burns, to the home of a friend to prepare himself for it. Here he first glimpsed beautiful Jaqueline DuMoyne.

When Arnold was well enough to discuss business, Wallace showed a knowledge of the river trade that was amazing to the steamboat captain. It was Wallace's plan to buy up some old river boat, refit it, and offer part ownership and the captaincy of it to his friend. In the midst of all this Arnold was sent for by Caroline Sheperd, a young lady of means and position, with whom he had fancied himself in love. But she seemed unduly concerned about Will Huston's welfare, and Arnold came away with his heart quite free, but with a heightened interest in Jaqueline DuMoyne. From Wallace he learned the story of her past—of her unfortunate marriage to the reckless young rake, Andrea DuMoyne; of his various escapades; of his curious dagger duel in the dark with Jean Fouchet, and his flight and mysterious disappearance into the bayou.

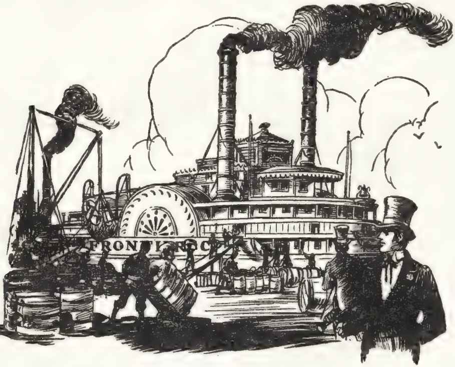
The cousins met for their affair of honor. Arnold had decided secretly to withhold his fire. But Will, by nature nervous, was scared into firing by a jerk of the other's hand; and Arnold, maddened by Will's shot, blazed away blindly—a shot that went wide of its mark, but which shocked Will into a dead faint. For this the cousins hated each other more than ever.

It fell to Arnold Wallace to arrange for a crew for the new steamboat project. Without cash, with but his word to offer as security, he sought out an old swamp-rat, Walt Gunn, who lived by his Bible, his rifle and by certain shady dealings; and this great bear of a man, sensing Arnold's intense earnestness, finally agreed to deliver to him a crew of black men. Arnold paid another visit to Jaqueline DuMoyne; and left strangely out of sorts saying to himself—

"Well, I'll never go *there* again."

## XIII

ARNOLD HUSTON never felt better in his life than the day that he first boarded the *Frontier City.* A fresh breath of autumn was in the air of the bayou country, pleasantly contrasting with the late hot spell in the narrow New Orleans streets from which he had come. Now Huston's star was conspicuously on the ascendent; he was eager to get his teeth into the labor ahead. His blood went through his arteries with a zing, making every muscle in his body enthusiastically alive.



A stubby little sternwheeler had brought him up the threading bayou beside which the *Frontier City* lay, six miles from the main channel of the Mississippi. The sluggish stream was so narrow that the overhanging branches of cottonwoods sometimes brushed both guards of the little steamboat. There had been an encouraging amount of water there, however; and as for the width of the channel, Huston presumed that if the *Frontier City* had got up there once she could get down again, given an equal stage of the river.

"How long has the *Frontier City* been up here?" he asked the pilot once.

"Only 'bout eighteen months."

"River pretty high when she went up?"

"Oh, middlin' high." The man at the wheel considered for a time. "Well—heavy middlin', I reckon. She'll float next month, I sh'd say."

Huston craned for the first glimpse of his prospective boat as the puffing sternwheeler at last opened the mouth of the tributary bayou where the *Frontier City* lay. His first glimpse of her was disappointing, she looked so definitely decayed. She was bigger than he remembered her, though, measuring two hundred forty feet from deadpost to transom; and now she looked larger than she really was, squatting broadly in the mud, completely bottling up the mouth of the inlet she had chosen for her internment. Her three decks towered imposingly, ancient and gray, behind the leafy screen.

Huston leaped to the bank without need of the stageplank; and the fussing sternwheeler pompously shoved its way on up the bayou in a trickle of water that looked as if it would hardly bear up a duck.

"Hi! Captain Pumpernickel!"

After an interval of alternate hailing and chewing at bits of grass, both without result, Huston impatiently boarded and ran up the leaf-drifted main stairway to the boiler-deck. A curious figure met him at the cabin's entrance.

"Captain Pumpernickel, I'm Arnold Huston."

The captain of the *Frontier City* was struggling into a rusty old coat; but he now paused half-way in the process, looking more like a man taking off his coat to fight than one dressing to receive guests.

"Who?"

Pumpernickel was aged, it appeared, beyond all reckoning, but he retained the pinkness of skin of an over-washed child. His cheeks were drooping, rounded folds; his nose a shorter and more bulbous fold, but equally drooping, laid in the middle. Beneath the apparently boneless nose his mouth was an almost circular pucker. He was the only man Huston had ever seen that held a cigar straight out under his nose as he smoked: the shape of the man's mouth seemed to explain that he could have smoked no other way.

"Captain Arnold Huston," the riverman repeated.

"Well," said the old man, still poised in the suspended struggle with his coat, "you don't look it."

His voice was as dry as the windrowed leaves with which the deck was cluttered, but his eyes were of a piercing blue, round and shiny as glass marbles. He inspected Huston from the shoelaces upward, so that beneath the brim of his hat only the flabby old face was visible; until as they traveled upward, those round blue eyes seemed to pop from under the rim of the hat, with an effect that was startling.

"No?" said Arnold.

"You're a boy," the old man averred dogmatically. "You got a face like a boy. Anyways," he added uncertainly, "you have until y'start grinnin'." He slowly drew his arms out of the coat sleeves again and the garment collapsed to the deck as if overwhelmingly relieved. Captain Pumpernickel let it lie. "What boat was y'captain on?"

"My own boat," said Huston, "the *Peter Swain*. She burned."

"That so? Well, I'm glad to see you. A captain's a captain—even if he is on'y a boy. Y'gimme a start at first. I thought y'was one o' the capitalists. I been expectin' 'em to come see about buyin' my boat."

He gave Huston a hand like a skeleton pasted over with parchment.

"Were they comin' today?"

"How?"

"I say, were the buyers comin' today?"

"I dunno if they was comin' today. Mebbe they ain't comin'. Hope they don't. I jes said I was expectin' 'em."

"How long have you been expectin' 'em?" Huston inquired disinterestedly, peering past him into the cabin of the boat.

"How? Oh—about a year."

Huston was surprized into shooting a quick glance at him. At this point there appeared from the dark interior of the cabin a lank, high-hipped, long-striding cat of extraordinary size. The animal rubbed a small bony head with enormously long ears against the cabin timbers, emitted two purrs so loudly that Huston looked down to see what had broken loose and disappeared around the corner of the cabin, striding.

"Who's that?" Huston demanded.

"How?" Conversation with Captain Pumpernickel required perpetual repetition. "That's just a cat. No partic'lar cat. Come with the boat. Always ben with the boat. You're fidgety. Askin' who is a cat. Glad to see y'though."

Pumpernickel shook hands with Huston again in an undecided way, as if uncertain whether he had done so before or not.

"Expectin' to sell. That's why I ain't keepin' her up better. Don't want to go throwin' good money after bad. Don't know whether them capitalists is comin' or not. Leave 'em stay away. Want to make a beggar out of a man. Won't pay nothin'. Hurtin' no one but theirselfs." Here Captain Pumpernickel mumbled off into a procession of virulent blasphemies that sometimes made his dry voice crack like a whip and sometimes seemed to be choking him with their invisible bulk. "Have a drink," he concluded.

He had led the way inside to the cabin's best stateroom, a compartment equipped with a dresser and four-poster bed, instead of the usual bunks. Here a stupendous confusion prevailed. The drawers of the dresser were half out, disgorging unlaundered linen; old suits and overalls were wrestling among themselves on the floor, on the bed and on the single chair; the doors of the wardrobe stood open, but only one or two things were hung up inside. A tray of dirty dishes stood on the dresser, and on the floor near the door was a second over which Captain Pumpernickel stumbled with a great clatter and spluttering of oaths.

"Eat breakfast in bed," he explained in his dry voice. "Cook it night before. Wake up in mornin', there she is by the bed. Cold of course. Better'n gettin' up though. Man has to use his head—pervide for himself."

Rummaging, he produced a squat bottle and a pair of glasses that he cleaned, after some thought, by wiping with the disordered bed-spread.

"Well, here's how."

"Luck," responded Huston, tossing off two fingers of brandy in a gulp.

"Place looks like a torpoon struck it," Pumpernickel went on disconsolately. "Ain't cleaned up lately. Man gets tired cleanin' up. That's nigger work anyway. I got better things t'do 'th my time'n to do work a nigger should be doin'. Time's more valyble'n that."

"Certainly," Huston agreed.

Pumpernickel brooded, his loosely folded features drooping over his glass.

"Aim to live like a white man. Can't no one do that by doin' nigger work. Wasn't always this way. Times has gone to the dogs. I used to be captain of this boat. I'm captain yet. I'll take her out an' run her pretty soon—if times get better. Got to get capital first. If I don't I'll have to get a ladder to get into this room. Can't afford a nigger. All I got left is this boat. Little money. Not enough to rent a nigger. Good boat, though. Damn her anyway! God help rivermen. Ain't nothin' but misery fer a man runnin' a boat."

"Look here," said Huston; and Captain Pumpernickel said, "How?"

"Why don't you," Huston almost shouted, "sell the old boat and get you a little house and a nigger, and live in comfort?"

"Can't get nothin' for it," Pumpernickel said testily. "Ain't goin' to sell fer a price that'll keep me four or five years, then leave me without a roof over my head. They want to make a beggar out of a man. Don't want to give nothin'. Jest as soon see the rightful captain of the boat settin' out in the rain. Make 'em laugh. Say it serves the old fool right. No, sir! I won't do it. Decided this ain't a boat no more. It's a house. Damn good house! Many a millionaire ain't got the ekal. This ain't the boiler-deck no more—this is the second floor. That out there ain't the guards—it's the side gallery. The Texas-house is the attic an' the pilot-house is the lookaround cupolo. The galley—"

The old man seemed game to follow out the fancy indefinitely, but Huston, growing impatient, broke into the monologue.

"Captain, I often meet men that might be interested in buyin' a boat—an' payin' its full value too. Why don't you let me look her over? Maybe I can find a buyer for you."

"How?" said Pumpernickel, cocking his head to one side; and Huston went over it all again. When he understood what Huston was getting at the captain of the *Frontier City* remained unenthusiastic. "Glad to show you the boat though," he decided.

With this he fell into a reverie, his glass-marble eyes goggling moodily at Huston's knees; and he remained thus for so long that Huston almost lost hope. When loud throat-clearings failed to attract the old man's attention, he went out to look over the boat for himself.

Down the leaf-fouled stairs he went, feeling that the *Frontier City* was a house indeed, squatting so flatly in the mud; and made his way back through the rubbish of the deck-room to the hatchway of the hold. There was water in it, of course; the wonder to Huston, as he peered down into the blackness by the aid of a match, was that there was not more. He could tell nothing by looking in from above, so he stripped off his clothes and, retaining only his long-bladed knife, lowered himself into three feet of chill black water in the bottom.

The steamboat hold was, of necessity, a shallow affair; in the *Frontier City* there was hardly five feet of clearance between the flooring and the timbers of the deck above; and this flatly cramped space was such a forest of trunk-like uprights and diagonal bracing timbers that a man could hardly grope his way among them. The flooring went but a little way to either side of the central passageway, where the timbers of the bottom itself were exposed. For some little time he worked his way about, feeling the wet wood here and there with his knife; and he was both pleased and surprized by the result. Finally he struck the knife into the bottom timbers with a great chunking splash; and, having broken the blade in the hard wood, was satisfied.

He turned back toward the dim light of the hatchway through the black underwater corridors, a labyrinth like a catacomb, its flatness making the boat seem, from this viewpoint, a vast leviathan. He was suddenly startled by the vision of Captain Pumpernickel's head, weirdly hanging skull downward through the hatch. The eyes were so glassy, and the flabby features, drooping the other way now, were so motionless that Huston thought the man had fallen dead in the act of leaning over the hatch. A thin strand of hair that Huston had not noticed before trailed downward from the top of the old man's inverted head like Spanish moss.

The suspended head offered speech.

"Oh, there you are down in the cellar," said the desiccated voice. "Ain't you, huh?" Pumpernickel seemed anxious to assure himself that nothing malignantly mysterious was going on. "Hey! Where *are* you, anyway?"

"I'm here in the hold!" Huston shouted, suddenly fearful that the old man should clamp down the hatch upon him in some senile misconception. "Here in the hold!"

"Cellar," Pumpernickel amended abruptly, with an apparent loss of interest. The head disappeared, only to descend again a moment later. "Your clo'es is up here," said the head inanely.

"I know it!" yelled Huston.

Captain Pumpernickel withdrew; Huston could hear him mumbling to himself above in the deck-room.

"What's he doin'. Clothes up here. Arnh! He put 'em here hisself—"

As Huston had almost gained the hatchway again the flabby face was suddenly thrust down again not six inches from his own. The cracked old voice shouted mightily in Huston's ear, Pumpernickel evidently believing that his visitor was still in the distant depths of the hold.

"Be you takin' a bath?" he shouted.

"No!" roared Huston, and the head was snatched away.

The riverman pursued the remainder of his examination swiftly and systematically. Captain Pumpernickel pattered after him, relating long irrelevancies in short sentences that alternately rose to an ear-piercing rasp and sunk to unintelligible mumbles. Before Huston put on his clothes he lowered himself from the chocks and went diving and wallowing in the muck under the boat as far as he could reach, in an examination of the outer sheathing. Pumpernickel was still talking each time Huston emerged from the mud, exactly as if he had never noticed his guest's submersion at all.

Later, as he bathed in a clear pool of water a hundred yards aft the *Frontier City*, Huston studied the lines of the idle boat with an increasing appreciation. At first sight she was homely enough; but her timbers were true as the day she was made, and he reflected with satisfaction how trim she could look with her Texas-house reduced by half, her boiler-deck lengthened forward and fresh paint over every inch of her dingy gray. By the time he had completed his inspection he knew what he was going to do.

"How would you like a job as mate on a boat?" he asked tentatively.

"How? No, sir!" Pumpernickel's vehemence might have been surprizing, had not Huston understood that the old man's proposal to return to the river had no grounding in actual intent. "Never!" said Pumpernickel again. "I don't want nothin' to do with runnin' no boat. Misery. Not me. I been through the mill. I got a good residence here. I know when I'm well off. If I was offered a thousand dollars a day I'd not—"

Huston tried a new tack.

"When I quit the river," he said, "I'm goin' to live on somebody else's boat. I'll take it easy, and I'll have everythin' a man could want. Cabin niggers to clean out my room, the best meals in the country, breakfast in bed—"

"Yes you will!" Pumpernickel burst out. His drooping features quivered with a suggestion of rage, but his sharp blue eyes, being perfectly round and glassy, could of course express nothing. "When you get old you'll be like me. You'll turn your boat into a house, because nobody'll give you nothin' for it. Takes money to be a cabin passenger. Rivermen make money—I've made plenty. But what does it get you? All gets away. Leaves you where you started from. Show me the riverman that ever got anywhere? Every damn one dies broke!"

Huston could have named an unlimited number of rivermen who had gotten somewhere, but he did not trouble himself. "If you got enough money for your boat to ride the river as a cabin passenger the rest of your life, would you sell?"

"D'you think I'm crazy?"

"How much do you ask?" Huston demanded abruptly.

"Seventeen thousand," said the dry voice.

"You're three times higher than you'll ever get," Huston told him.

Captain Pumpernickel stared at him while he developed himself to a state of complete enragement. It took the greater part of a minute for the old man to achieve this, but when it was accomplished he fairly jiggled.

"You're jest like the rest," he shrilled. "Want to cheat me. Won't give nothin'. Don't care if—"

"Come down a little!" Huston shouted back at him. "Come down within reason!"

"Not a damn cent! Not a damn cent! I won't hear—"

Huston could hear the fussing sternwheeler poking her way back down the bayou. In not so many minutes her stageplank would be out for him, and he would have the opportunity of leaving his business unfinished or staying with old Pumpernickel until next day.

"Listen!" said Huston so harshly that the old man's tirade ceased. "I'll give you two hundred dollars a year for life. And—"

"I won't hear it! I won't—" Pumpernickel bounced up and down on the balls of his feet.

"Listen!" Huston checked him again. "If you sell me the boat on those terms I'll put her on the river, and I'll give you free cabin passage for as long as you live. I'll sign a contract for that."

Pumpernickel was given pause. His drooping features relaxed from their temporary distortion.

"How?" he said presently.

Huston explained it again. The proposition soaked in slowly, but when it had penetrated it was plain that most of the wind was out of the old man's sails.

"You'll have to come higher," he contended querulously. "Don't think you can come it over me! You're only a boy. I know what I'm about. I—"

"Three hundred dollars a year," said Huston. "And that's my last word."

The whistle of the sternwheeler was shrieking for her landing, with a volume of sound suggesting that a mighty five-decker was going to emerge from the willows, instead of a scant two decks with a pill box of a pilot-house on top.

"I'm leaving on that boat," said Huston. "Are you interested or not?"

"Don't push me," Pumpernickel warned him. "Because I ain't to be pushed! I—"

"All right. I'll buy another boat. Sorry we can't come to terms."

He thrust out his hand. The old captain shook hands dazedly, and Huston turned to the stairs.

"Where y'goin'?" demanded Pumpernickel, coming to life. "Let's talk this over! Mebbe we can—"

"Shall I bring the contract tomorrow?"

"Well—stay over, Captain! We got to talk this thing out. I don't want to—"

The bayou steamboat was sagging to a stop at the mouth of the inlet. A hail came from her hurricane roof:

"Cap'n Huston! Yuh comin'?"

"Yes!" he roared back. Then to Pumpernickel, "Good-by, Captain!"

He ran down the stair and sprang across the grass-grown stageplank. A cry that was like a shout of despair hailed him from the boiler deck of the *Frontier City*, checking Huston on the path. Captain Pumpernickel had come to the rail. He looked a pathetic figure, standing there outworn and old by the bleared woodwork of his boat. He seemed to be vainly pulling up against the droop of his whole frame, as if the tentacles of the years were climbing up to gather him in, as the long stems of the wood-vines were creeping up from the shore to cover the *Frontier City*. And there were the marks of a long despair in the loosely folded face with the puckered lips, as if the man might be ghost-ridden by night.

"Bring the contract," he shouted. The cracked voice was almost conciliating. "Bring it tomorrow! Won't do no harm. Have a look an' see what it is."

"All right!" Huston shouted back.

He grinned as he ran down the path.

## XIV

HUSTON and Wallace had bought the *Frontier City* in early December. As Christmas drew near, Arnold's plans for his new boat were already taking visible form.

These days were the happiest that Huston had known since he first had taken possession of the ill-fated *Peter Swain*. The Mississippi River, at once the background and the lifestream of their project, was at this season teeming with a renewed life. The cotton crop was just beginning to bear down upon all means of transportation with the full weight of its mass; and under their towering loads the steamboats plied the great waterway, rejoicing. Parties of planters and their families traveled the river to St. Louis, to Memphis, to Vicksburg or to New Orleans, hastening to brighten the holidays by expending some part of the wealth promised by the crop. On the bigger boats bands played, and there was gayety and dancing every night.

Down in New Orleans, the second port of the nation, the winter weather alternated between periods of relenting sunshine, when it seemed to be midsummer once more, and intervals of rawness in which it rained every day. At the same time reports came down river that the steamboat *Cally Mandarin*, in attempting a final run to St. Paul, had become locked in the ice and was indefinitely delayed, waiting for a thaw.

The river was running high, swelled by the periodically thawing northern snows. But ultimate high water would come two months later, so that the fullest flood was still well ahead. Similarly, the high flood of river trade was also ahead, giving the steamboat men reason to look forward to prosperity still greater than that they already enjoyed. Christmas was coming, high water was coming, the boom days of the crop were on their way; and the steamboats rushed at their work with a song.

You could scarcely step out on to the bank of the broad Mississippi, in those days, without sighting a steamboat; at no part of the river were their bellowing whistles silent for long. Their good gray smoke was almost always visible some place to the people of the river-bottom plantations, encouraging them with their implications of thriving trade and the bright beckoning of prosperous towns.

Through these days Huston and Mark Wallace worked in a frenzy of enthusiasm, each in his own way. The articles of incorporation had been drawn up to their satisfaction at last, Huston insisting upon and obtaining a wide latitude of control. Each of them had found his work and his place.

Mark Wallace was proving himself a business manager of no mean ability. He had grown haggard under the eyes before those loans that he had arranged were finally consummated. But, to Huston's cynical surprize, he eventually delivered all he had promised; though it was doubtful if he could have turned up a dollar more, had it been essential. In the interim between the floating of the loans and the launching of the boat he was acting as a purchasing agent, in which rôle he was proving himself equally efficient.

Meantime, the *Frontier City* still squatted in the mud, for the high water that was necessary for her extraction from the bayou would hasten for no man, nor moderate itself for any when it came. Until she could be floated out and taken to drydock, they could do little to repair her hull; they kept her pumped dry within, to discourage rot, but the caulking had to wait. There was much, however, that could be done where she lay. Huston, eager to have her ready in time to get the benefit of the boom days of the crop, pressed the work forward with unceasing energy.

Since the *Frontier City* could not go to the yards for repairs, men and materials were brought to her remote retreat. Cooks came first. Next, two young men appeared with drafting outfits. For some days they worked long hours under Huston's direction, making measurements and drawing plans. Here matters seemed to pause for a bit. But Huston labored with unflagging haste, and the final plans for the *Frontier City's* alterations appeared in his hands at last.

Now the peace of the deep-hidden bayou was disturbed in good earnest. Great stacks of lumber were thrown thundering on to her forecastle, and the next boat after its arrival brought a crew of carpenters and their assisting slaves. Thirty negroes, each burdened with his personal supply of sowbelly, corn-meal, molasses and black-eyed peas now arrived, the first allotment of the slaves arranged for by Huston on his visit to that old bear of the bayous, Walt Gunn. The boat swarmed with life, and the huge galley-range was not again allowed to grow cold.

All day long the clatter of hammers sounded in the bayou in accompaniment to the screech of drawn nails. Down came the pilot-house, and the whole huge, overbalancing structure of the Texas. Off came the whole front works of the upper decks and cabin, whose stubbiness had always given the boat a peculiar sawed-off, repulsed appearance. Stacks of rubbish beside the boat began to grow. The guards were piled with nail-kegs, tool-lockers, rope coils, tackle rigging, mill work, straw-packed cases of glass.

The framework of the extended cabin and upper deck appeared, giving in a single day an entirely different swing to the boat's lines. A new long, low Texas-house took form on the hurricane roof where the disproportionate one had once caught the wind. It was surmounted in turn by a new pilot-house, long and commodious, in place of the extraordinary spindling tower that had served before.

The slaves from Walt Gunn were set to work with scouring bricks, holystone and sandpaper, dressing down the decks and cleaning the scaling paint from the main structure that was to remain. They sanded down the white and mahogany woodwork of the cabin, leveled the warping narrow boards of the decks, made every inch of her wood ready for new paint.

Through the reign of commotion Captain Pumpernickel survived in a daze. Occasionally he offered an ineffectual suggestion; but for the most part he kept out of the way nearly as well, though with less equanimity, than that lank, high-hipped cat, whose detached poise bore a touch of genius.

But by far most important of all to the destiny of the *Frontier City* was the advent of Arthur MacMaugh.

MacMaugh was a steamboat engineer, an engine-room engineer. In figure he was singularly tall, and bony in the extreme; he was not noticeably well proportioned, running to too great prominence of wrists and knees. But his hands, from which the engine-oil grime never quite disappeared, were at once powerfully and delicately strong, giving the impression that they could with equal ease bend a horseshoe out of shape or adjust the mechanism of a watch.

He had a great rock of a head, covered with a shock of unkempt hair, the color of mud; it was commonly in need of a cut, for MacMaugh was accustomed to forget about those things. His big face was irregularly lined into lumpy sections, as if he had carved it out himself from the original rock with one of his own cold-chisels, and without the aid of a mirror. It was a strong face, though, with prominent thin lips and eyes at once kindly and very hard-bearing. And he was no more Scotch in soul than the bagpipes of Auchtermuchty.

MacMaugh had not accepted the berth on the *Frontier City* unqualifiedly. Huston had been at pains to seek him immediately upon his definite acquisition of the boat. He had tracked him down at last in the engine-room of a sea-going tug, sitting with the engines after the hours of his watch, absently feeding himself a stick of cornbread with one hand and making small figures in a notebook with the other. He had listened to Huston's story solemnly.

"It's my own private belief," Huston told him, "that this boat has one of the fastest hulls on the river. She's not much, otherwise, so I expect to make the most of that. I'll do anythin' within reason to give her speed."

"I'm no great hand on specifications," said MacMaugh in his low, rather thick-tongued voice.

"It isn't specifications I want," Huston returned, "but an engineer."

"And are there none idle?" MacMaugh asked.

"There are idle men in every profession," said Huston. "I've had enough of idle engineers."

MacMaugh smiled; and in the end he agreed to come and have a look. More than that he would not say.

As they rode the river to the place where the *Frontier City* lay, Huston was at pains to reveal to the engineer the exact state of the finances of the boat, together with a somewhat modified version of his own plans.

"Why do you tell me this?" MacMaugh asked.

"Because it is of interest to you."

"It is not."

"Then you are not the man for the job," Huston said.

"Of that we shall see," said MacMaugh.

When they at last arrived at the location of the boat it was four o'clock in the afternoon, but Arthur MacMaugh nevertheless slowly changed into overalls and disappeared in the engine-room. He was submerged nine hours and seventeen minutes, by Huston's watch; during which time they had to send him his supper, as he did not come out in answer either to the bell or to personal hails. Huston left him undisturbed during this period, judging as well as he could by the occasional noises from the engine-room what MacMaugh was about.

At one time a loud prolonged battering

was heard, as if the Scotch engineer had decided to wreck the entire equipment with a sledge hammer. Again, a call came for firemen; and for an hour and a half thick twin columns of smoke poured from the stacks. Just before the last of Captain Pumpernickel's wood supply was exhausted the fires were drawn; and thereafter there was such a long silence in the engine-room that Huston was of the opinion that the tall engineer had gone to sleep.

A little after one o'clock in the morning, however, some time after Huston had sent midnight coffee down, MacMaugh appeared on the boiler-deck, and came to slump into a chair beside Huston. There was a silence.

"What do you think of her?" Huston asked at last.

"Hopeless," said MacMaugh.

"What seems to be the matter with her?"

"Everything."

"What are you goin' to do?"

"Go back to my tug. When you have decided what you are willing to put into her, you might let me know."

"That's for you to decide," said Huston disinterestedly.

"What is?"

"What to put into her."

"But you are the owner," drawled MacMaugh.

"You are the engineer. I want to put in an entirely different kind of hook-up down there. Of course, if you don't feel equal—"

"Why didn't you say so in the first place?" MacMaugh demanded. "I have spent the greater part of a night examining those engines!"

Huston grinned.

"I thought you might be interested in findin' out what made her slow before."

"Ugh!" said MacMaugh.

"I want you to see to the purchase, installation and management of the *Frontier City's* new power," Huston told him. "If you're not the man for it, say so."

"And if I wish to spend—"

"I will affix my name to the checks."

"But if I spend too much—"

"You will break the company, and the boat will come back to her bayou. You know just what means we have, for I've told you. I want a fast boat. I think the *Frontier City* has the makings of one of the fastest on the river."

"Aye?" said MacMaugh sourly.

"Yes," said Huston.

MacMaugh knocked out his pipe upon the rail.

"I'll think it over in the morning," he growled, and stumped off to his stateroom.

Huston, sleeplessly pacing the deck with a headful of ambitious dreams, nevertheless perceived, presently, that there was a light going in the engine-room again; and, peering down the well of the precipitous stairway, he was entertained by the sight of Arthur MacMaugh sitting at the engineer's station in a long white nightgown, smoking slowly. It was almost three o'clock before the engine-room was at last dark.

The ungainly engineer was at his renewed investigations early the next day; and for four days he appeared only at meals. Sometimes he smoked for hours, his eyes apparently absorbed by some inconsequential valve. At other times he made a great number of measurements. He was known to have spent a mysterious hour and a half in the starboard paddle-box; again, he prowled for an entire forenoon in the flat black galleries of the hold. One day he spent several hours with two gangs of negroes, who hauled a heavy rope from stem to stern under the keel. And he used up all the stationery on the boat by covering it with algebra. It was apparent to Huston that MacMaugh already knew so much more about the *Frontier City* than he ever would, that he was made to feel he had bought a pig in a poke.

Through it all MacMaugh preserved an attitude of the deepest gloom.

At eleven o'clock at night, following the fourth day of his obscure investigations, MacMaugh sought out Huston. For a time he sat facing the young captain, his hands slowly rubbing his knees. He appeared to be engaged in the deepest thought. At last he addressed Huston with the air of one imparting a most singular discovery.

"My friend," he said with surprizing conviction, "you have the makings of a very fast boat."

The suggestion of a spark glowed deep under the brows of the steel-gray eyes; for the first time since Huston had known MacMaugh the man seemed brightened by an actively living interest. Huston was deeply gratified; so much so that he did not even smile at the solemn restatement of what he had told MacMaugh in the first place.

"Well?" said Huston.

"Well?" said MacMaugh.

"Will you undertake to power this boat?"

"I will, sir—under the arrangement that you suggested."

"Send me the checks to be signed, with just a notation of what the main expenditures were for."

"I'll start at once."

He left the mud-grounded *Frontier City* the next morning. Once thereafter, in the next six weeks, he conferred with Huston as to the dry-docking of the boat. Otherwise he did not appear either at the boat or at the pigeonhole of an office that Mark Wallace had set up in Decatur street. From time to time word came from him by messenger or by mail; it invariably consisted of a long list of expenditures made out in MacMaugh's small, neat hand, the account detailed down to the last penny's worth of washers or bit of waste.

Arnold Huston read these lists with avidity, partly because their very completeness assured him of the care MacMaugh was taking that no time or means should be lost once the *Frontier City* was afloat. But chiefly because the lists told him graphically of the progress made toward powering his boat. Slowly he read from week to week of the assembling of the engines through the acquisition of an extraordinary number of individual parts found in diverse places. It appeared that MacMaugh intended to assemble his engines from the greatest possible number of old wrecks. Huston's faith in the Scotchman, however, was unshaken. And Mark Wallace was elated at the smallness of the checks that were clipped to each list for them to sign.

So time passed. The carpentering and interior work on the *Frontier City* was done. She was ready to paint. She was painted. All was ready for the water to come to float her to her dry docks for hull work and the installation of her engines. They waited, it seemed, interminably.

Then at last, in the last few days of January, the old yellow-brown river rose and rose, breaking a levee here, ripping cross-country to shorten a bend there. All concerned lived on the *Frontier City* for three days, pacing restlessly, drinking much, praying for that last necessary foot of water. It came, and she floated! With MacMaugh's pumps singing, the brilliantly white boat took to the river again, floating high and proudly in spite of the ignominy of being towed by that stubby little sternwheeler.

"We'll be at 'em soon!" Huston said as they stood on the moving hurricane roof. "Oh lord, Mark, it's damned near time!"

## XV

IT WAS late in that long month during which the *Frontier City* lay in dock that Arnold was next sought out by his cousin. Will Huston found the riverman in a cabin of the *Frontier City*, of course; Arnold, now heart and soul in the service of his boat, was seldom away from her. He never slept except in the captain's cabin in the Texas, and though his thoughts sometimes turned against his will to the house on the Rue Chartres, they for the most part followed the interests of the *Frontier City* as hounds follow a cottontail.

Will Huston came, beautifully dressed in the rather distinguished planter's garb that he affected. He wore a long coat of gunmetal gray, and pleated shirt, over which hung a tie hardly wider than a shoestring, in long loops. The carriage of his head was proud, though naturally so, so that the flared points of his very high collar gave no appearance of discommoding him. But he was not so tall that he needed to take off his soft hat to go through doors, and he did not remove it as he entered Huston's neat cabin.

Mark Wallace and Arnold Huston were sitting at the latter's narrow table, checking through certain lists of supplies. Mark rose and bowed slightly and very coolly as Arnold's erstwhile dueling antagonist came in; Arnold's nod was more genial, though suggestive of no respect.

"Well, say it," suggested Will Huston.

It seemed to Arnold that the green-gray eyes in the pale smooth face were a little feverish above their dark circles.

"I beg your pardon?" said the riverman; and there the cousins stuck, staring at each other like two waiting dogs.

"I think your meaning eludes him," Mark suggested to Will.

"I think not," said Will Huston, regarding the lean man at the table with a sort of polite disgust.

"I beg to differ," said Arnold. "I haven't the remotest notion what you're standin' there gogglin' about."

"It is my cousin's gentlemanly custom," said Will Huston, "to invariably address me wherever we may meet by saying, 'Well, you ass?' "

He mimicked Arnold's voice more odiously than realistically, revealing the evil state of his temper. Mark Wallace was forced to conceal sudden laughter by choking in his handkerchief. Arnold showed only a slight flush of irritation.

"However," Will Huston went on, "if he is going to omit the usual formality, perhaps we may as well get on with the discussion for which I came."

"By all means," said Arnold, "let's proceed at once with the quarrelin'. What's the outrage this time?"

"That, I think, is a personal matter between the two of us alone."

"Oh, rubbish!" said Arnold with annoyance. "Mark Wallace is completely in my confidence. Now out with—"

"Oh, no," protested Mark, his fine dark eyes wandering sorrowfully from one to the other. "You'll most certainly excuse me, I am sure."

They did not object further as he went out. When the door had closed behind Mark, Will Huston drew a light chair near the table at which his cousin sat. He seated himself, crossed his legs, thrust his hands deep into his pockets and for a time stared moodily at his knees.

"I hardly know how to make myself clear to a person like you," he said at last. He favored Arnold with the briefest upward flick of his green-gray eyes, then fell to contemplating his knees again.

"Regrettable," said Arnold cheerfully.

"You were born into a good enough family," Will Huston went on, affecting the air of the musing philosopher with a success which his nervousness marred. "I have heard that your father was a fellow without merit. It seems fairly apparent that this must be true."

The faintest suggestion of an ironical smile tightened the riverman's thin lips, and disappeared again. He watched Will Huston with an expression of concealed entertainment, eyes half closed and mouth partly open—an expression so unusual to him that it came near giving Will the fidgets when he glanced up at him again.

"In any case, it is an indisputable fact that you have sacrificed your own social position."

"Ah," said Arnold noncommittally. "In what way?"

"You squandered your family fortune. You—"

"I?" Arnold interrupted. "Which one?"

"You and your father between you, then. You threw away your opportunity for an education. You degraded yourself to the level of a wharf rat. It's common knowledge that you killed a man with a chair in a Natchez gambling dive—"

"You astonish me," said Huston. "When was this?"

"Do you mean to deny it?"

"No. The incident may have slipped my memory."

"In any case, you've got to be pretty

well known as a drunken brawler, consorting with the most disreputable associates—"

It was impossible for Will Huston to say these things to his cousin without a high degree of perturbation. He was attempting, Arnold could see, to give the iron-and-velvet impression, but his voice was less cold and hard than he must have wished it, and an occasional tremor in the muscles of his smooth face betrayed his tension. Arnold became curious.

"Well, what about it?"

"You persist in certain aspirations," Will answered, affecting the coldly precise, "which, under the circumstances, are necessarily odious to all concerned." He looked at his cousin squarely, and the malevolence in his green eyes was genuine.

Arnold was mystified.

"If I want to launch boats," he said, "I'm goin' to launch boats. And the rest of the Hustons can—"

"I consider myself," said Will, "to be speaking in the interests of the Shepherd family."

"So that's it!" Arnold sat back. "You're authorized to do so, I suppose?"

"You know as well as I do that Earl Shepherd is the last man to delegate any one else to speak for him."

"Oh, you're self-elected then?"

"You can put it that way."

"A very pretty display of cheek," Arnold commented without heat.

Will Huston flushed.

"You are very well aware," he said, "that Caroline Shepherd's father is a doddering old man, living nowadays entirely in the past. It's plain to anybody that he hardly has sense enough left to get himself fed and dressed, and probably wouldn't if it weren't for his servants—let alone being competent to guard the interests of the young girl who happens to be his daughter."

"I certainly hope," said Arnold, "that Earl Shepherd will appreciate your puttin' in a word for him this way."

"Her mother," Will went on, biting down the resentment with which his cousin always inspired him, "is a most estimable woman, but—"

"Now you be careful," Arnold advised conversationally.

"—but has led a sheltered life, which has certainly not fitted her for coping with the schemings of unscrupulous rivermen."

"You make me sick," said Huston.

"You have seen fit," Will continued, forcing himself on through a situation that, though of his own making, was yet bitterly distasteful to him, "to take advantage of this circumstance to gain a singularly objectionable hold upon the mind of a virtually unprotected girl—"

Arnold suddenly exploded.

"What do you mean, sir!"

"Exactly what I say—sir!" With a terrific effort Will Huston maintained his affectation of detached coldness, even forcing a tone of irony into the last word.

"If I understand you," said his cousin, "I have every right to shoot you where you sit."

"It would be becoming to your character to shoot an unarmed man, I have no doubt. On the other hand, if you wish to meet me again, any time or place will suit me. Last time you got off with a slight wound. I can't guarantee to be so lenient another time."

"We're not gon' through another long rigmarole for the purpose of seein' you faint with fright at the sound of my pistol," Arnold informed him. "Your last exhibition was sufficiently disgustin'."

Will Huston's face went scarlet with rage, his eyes blazed greenly. For a moment Arnold thought Will would fling himself bodily across the table. He partially recovered himself, however.

"I came here to warn you," Will got out at last, trying hard to bring his quivering voice back to a level of coldness. "I persist in my intention."

He paused, seeking to control himself, and Arnold said judicially—

"Come on with the next insult."

"Your insolence may be monstrous," said Will Huston, "but you nevertheless find yourself in a singularly precarious position." His voice was more successfully menacing than Huston had ever heard it. "I happen to know better than any one else, perhaps, just what your ambitions are and how much they mean to you. I also know exactly what you have been doing and how. For one thing, you have gone into bankruptcy, on the strength of the burning of the *Peter Swain*. Immediately on top of that you have formed another company. I know exactly where you got the capital for that, and how."

"Very clever, I must say."

"How you persuaded Mark Wallace is a mystery to me. I can only think that he is an idle-headed dreamer, easily overborne. Anyway, the mass of your resources came from him. More than that, I know just where he stands financially. I don't know whether you know it or not, but Wallace has put himself into a remarkably fragile financial position. Half his funds rest on call notes, and the other half are unstable."

"Your interest is flatterin', but—"

"You may not realize it, but you are walking a singularly unsteady financial tight-rope."

"Well?"

"I don't think you are so badly informed that you don't know that I am now the controlling factor in very large financial interests."

"As nearly as I can judge," Arnold agreed, "your father's death slid you into a very soft thing. Hardly so big, though, as it seems to you when you have everythin' all muddled up."

"You are too poorly educated, of course," Will Huston went on insolently, "to know anything about the wheels within wheels that control the financial world. You'll have to take my word for it that I can personally be a considerable factor. You happen to be wrong in thinking the interests I'm handling are small. But even if you were right, a small cog in the situation can move the whole machine."

Will Huston had found opportunity to recover his mental balance before Arnold's relaxed air of interest. He went on coldly, with his eyes keen and narrow.

"You now have a chance for success. I hold nothing against you; I shall be glad to see you attain it. At the same time I consider that you are acting reprehensibly and out of all proportion to your station, in aspiring to Caroline Shepherd."

Arnold Huston's increase of interest was sudden and unfeigned.

"What did she say that threw you into this panic, Will?"

"She has never mentioned your name."

"You think my absence has depressed her or somethin' like that?"

"She has been nothing at all but herself."

"You said a funny thing awhile ago," Arnold insisted. "Somethin' about some hold you thought I had on the girl. You'll have to explain that, I think."

"I am a student of character," said Will, according himself the most popular bit of self-flattery known to man. "I have an unusual faculty for reading people."

"Is *that* all you base your silly assumptions on?"

"Sufficient, I think," Will answered, flushing.

"In short," Arnold pursued, "you can't make any headway yourself, so naturally you blame me!"

Will's gorge was visibly rising again. "That's entirely outside the point," he declared.

"Well then?"

Will Huston, with a heroic effort, whipped himself into the attack.

"I mean to say this: You are entirely unfitted, by your own choices, to—to enter the Shepherd family. And I wish to propose—forcibly propose that you withdraw from the situation, absolutely and entirely."

"Will, Will! You're outdoin' yourself!"

"Don't be in a hurry to laugh, my tightrope walker!"

"What?"

Will Huston rushed on furiously in a stumbling torrent of words.

"If you pertinaciously continue your intrusions—"

"Intrusions?"

"You don't deny that you are courting Caroline Shepherd?"

"I deny that it's any of your damned business if I am or not!"

"If you go on with that, you are going to lose, and lose heavily! You were only a wharf rat to begin with and you'll be just that and no more again, if you persist in thinking that your interests are separable from my assistance!"

"D'you mean you're offerin' a bribe?"

"Your financial predicament is a very perilous one. I'm certainly not offering a bribe. I'm calling your attention to a situation." Will was white-faced and trembling.

"A threat, then?"

"Call it that if you want to!"

Arnold sat back to study the spectacle that his cousin presented; and his chief emotion was that of mystified amazement. Looking at the other calmly, for all his annoyance with the man, Huston was at a loss, at first, to account for his cousin's extraordinary outbreak.

"He can't be so stupid," Arnold was thinking, "that he believes he can handle me that way!"

Will's smooth, rather round-cheeked face was paler than usual in his self-punishing wrath; but there was a quiver in the man's voice, and a suppressed flame in his eyes that might have been madness, for all Arnold knew.

"In the first place," Arnold thought analytically, "he hates me; he has always hated me. When I look him in the eye I have the edge on him, and he hates me all the more for that. Now, he's gone out of his head over this girl. He leads himself to believe that I stand in the way. He frets and fumes, getting a little crazier each time he is checked. He persuades himself that I am doing the girl a wrong, in addition to discommoding him. Finally he comes here, wild-eyed, and makes a desperate silly play—"

But Arnold's logic was unconvincing to himself. Never having been out of his head over a girl, he could not comprehend Will's state, even when he had diagramed it.

"What the devil's the matter with you?" he demanded suddenly.

"Not nearly as much as you might wish. I find myself in a dominating position, I think."

"I congratulate you!"

"By God," Will burst out, "I'll take the damned mockery out of you if it's my last act!" He got up so suddenly that his chair upset with a futile small clatter. His nostrils were white and trembling.

Arnold was angered by sheer contagion. A moment before he had pitied his cousin almost to the point of telling him that he had no further interest in Caroline Shepherd, and that she certainly had never had any interest in him. But the tension had become too much for him, and his temper broke.

"You fool," he cried, "d'you think you can?"

He was grinning, the strong teeth and the thin creases of the cheeks taking the youth out of his face. His smile could be an ugly sort of thing.

"We'll damned well find out!"

Will Huston's anger was not explosive and destroying as was Arnold's. Like most of his other violent emotions it turned inward, tightening his muscles until he was racked with the tension. Thus the door did not slam after him as he went out, but closed uncertainly, with a shaking latch.

When he was gone Mark Wallace returned.

"You missed something," said Huston dryly. "Your delicacy is too great for your own advantage."

"My delicacy did not prevent me from listening on the other side of the partition," said Mark with a faint smile. "What the devil do you want to have love affairs for? This is a fine time for it, I must say!"

"I haven't any love affair. Will and I have nothin' in common in that respect, nor in any other."

"But Will—"

"He doesn't know what he's talkin' about—as usual. As far as Caroline Shepherd is concerned, I'm out. Have been for a long time."

"Then why in God's name didn't you tell him so?"

"I wouldn't tell him anythin'. D'you mean to think he can come here and—"

"Oh, your damned stiff-necked pride, I suppose," said Mark with some heat. "I suppose you know that this silliness is apt to put us all in a very ticklish position?"

"You mean he can carry out his threats?"

Mark considered; he seemed to be trying to give a fair answer.

"I don't know," he decided.

"Well, it's up to you to see that he doesn't," said Huston testily. "Finance is your end; steamboatin' is mine."

"That's all very well—if you'd stick to steamboating. But if you go pulling three or four banks down on our heads you're liable to find yourself without any steamboat. And putting the responsibility off on me isn't going to get her back, either."

"Well what the devil do you think I can do about it?"

"If worst comes to worst you'll have to eat crow, that's what you'll have to do, my friend. You may have to apologize to him and ask him to call off his dogs."

"Can you imagine my doin' that, Mark?"

"I can imagine your breaking yourself and me too, if you get one of your damned bull-headed streaks!"

"It isn't as if," said Huston soberly, "it would do any good if I did. You have no idea of the bitterness of that man."

"Oh rubbish! A quarrel over a girl—"

"That has almost nothin' to do with it. My father and my uncle were bitter enemies before I was born. They—"

"Oh, another pack of rubbish!"

"Not altogether. The quarrel had its beginnin' in the existence of Will Huston himself."

"What has—"

"Will Huston thinks he's my cousin. He's not."

"He's not what?"

"He's not my cousin. We're closer than that, it happens. He's my half-brother."

"What?"

"Will's mother died at his birth. My uncle accepted Will as his son, knowing that he was no such thing."

"How do you know?"

"I have my father's word for it."

"But—"

"No one knows it but myself, now that my father and Dennison Huston are dead. I'm tellin' you now because you were gettin' ready to try to force a situation you knew nothin' about. Now, if you have the intelligence I credit you with, maybe you can imagine my uncle's bitterness toward my father and myself. Maybe you can appreciate their family religion—that Anastasius Huston's breed is to be squelched at all costs."

They sat looking at each other.

"Now," said Arnold, "what do you think of that?"

"I think," said Mark Wallace dryly, "that I've bet into a stacked deck."

"You'll have to make the most of it!"

## XVI

"YOU NEVER come to see me any more," Jacqueline DuMoyne said.

He had visited her perhaps half a dozen times in the last two months. It seemed to him, however, as if he had haunted her beyond all reason. His days, and a good part of his nights, had been filled with the labor involved in the making ready of the *Frontier City*. He certainly had had enough to fill his mind and make dreamless his short hours of sleep. Yet each time he left her house he had immediately begin thinking about when he would see her again. He would put it off as long as he could, avoiding the issue from day to day, until he could deceive himself no more. His self-deception had been fairly successful, and the intervals between his visits correspondingly long. But she didn't know, of course, how many times, at late hours of the night, he had walked past that great arched door.

"I wonder that you let me come at all."

"I shouldn't, I know."

"Why?" he asked defiantly.

She ignored that.

"Tell me about the boat."

"She'll launch Saturday."

"Captain! You sound as if you didn't care if she launched at all!"

"I'm tired, I guess. Getting old. I can't remember that I used to get tired at all."

"Old? At twenty-seven?" She always knew more about him than he had expected.

"I'm older than you are, anyway."

"Does that have to be so terribly old?"

He felt the blackness of a bitter mood closing on him as they sat down on the settee. It brought the bracketing lines to the corners of his mouth and made his eyes at once sultry and hard-edged. He sat rigidly, his knees crossed, staring out across the night-dimmed roofs to the river.

He was thinking of his father's words—

"If you are going to hunt turmoil all the time, turmoil is going to begin hunting you—"

This was the place where they always sat, where they could look out at the steamboats and the shipping. He thought it must be an interesting place to sit resting by daylight, when you could see the river traffic come and go; watching, perhaps, the deep-sea vessels starting for foreign ports and the busy steamboats beginning the daily race upriver. Probably you could see the sailors in the rigging, the pilots throwing their weight on the great wheels. But he had never been there except at night.

Often, on other nights, as he leaned on the rail of the *Frontier City* and drew deeply on a black cigar, he had thought of this settee and this window; but not in terms of the river. He had remembered rather the tones of Jacqueline DuMoyne's low voice, the darkness of her eyes, the sensitively changing expressions of her pale face, as delicately molded as a child's. These fancies had been pleasurable at first. When he tried to put them down they became a torment for his every idle moment.

He knew well enough what was the matter with him. Two months before it had been inconceivable to him that he should ever love any one but Caroline Shepherd. He had loved her desperately enough for a while. Even after he had been wearied by her silly apprehensions for Will Huston's welfare, and her blank-minded prejudice against the river, she still remained to him the embodiment of an ideal. He had judged all beauty by hers.

Jacqueline DuMoyne was in no sense a substitute for Caroline, but a personality entirely new to Huston's experience. Her attraction for him was a thing he had not sought nor desired. Rather some mysterious intoxicant that he felt in her presence had permeated him, making him see such depths of beauty in her as he knew it was impossible for a wholly sane man to perceive. It gave him a gnawing restlessness, so that when he was not grinding over paperwork at his desk he was never still for long.

One of his attributes had been an ability to rest completely when his work was done. That was gone now. Where once he had sat smoking and looking at the water, late at night before turning into his bunk, he now paced the guards, quarreling with his own imaginings, to all hours of the night. Some nights he gave up sleeping altogether, only flinging himself down, fully clothed, for an hour or two of restless dozing just before daylight. Sometimes he woke to find that he had rolled to his feet and gripped the mist-damp sill of his stateroom window in the moment of waking, as he had done the last night of the *Peter Swain;* but each time, as he came to his senses, it was to realize that it was not of fire that he had dreamed, nor of boats.

Reason told him that Jacqueline DuMoyne was not of his kind. She seemed subtly of a different race, an exotic thing that he could not hope fully to know, or understand. She was almost as unreal to him as his ill-formed notions of the island from which she had come. Huston's background was of practical things. The people, the smells, the boats of the Mississippi were the normal, homely things of his life; familiarity had worn away the picturesqueness and romance that had lured him to the river as a child. His one creed was accomplishment, his one field of action the steamboat life of the river.

In this direct scheme of things Jacqueline DuMoyne had no previous counterpart. Only the sight of the Mississippi gave him any assurance of reality in this new phase of his experience. New Orleans was becoming a strange place to him. Its French-Spanish buildings took on a brooding and unfamiliar look, so that as he walked between them he felt a thousand miles away from the familiar plantations and the river towns of country-like homes or brawling dives.

It did not seem to him logical or reasonable that Jacqueline DuMoyne should ever become his wife. To imagine her settled in a Natchez home seemed preposterous. He certainly could not tolerate her merely as a friend. To think of her as more than a friend and less than a wife was incompatible with his view of her. However, he did not reason into that. He was sufficiently absorbed in his endeavor to suppress a passion which at its flood-tide would be too deep-flowing and strong of current for mastery. And he feared the growing hidden power of it as the steamboats themselves feared shoal water.

"What is to be the name of your new boat, Captain?"

"I wanted to ask you about that. I thought— I was thinkin' maybe you would give her a name."

"Oh, I'd have no right to do that."

"Right? Her name is what I choose. And if I want her to be what you call her—"

"No, no! I wouldn't feel I could. Don't you think Mark should be consulted? Perhaps he has something in mind."

The black mood was closing in. He felt a slow anger well up, seething and fighting for expression. That single penetrating thing his father had said returned to him; and for an instant he sent a flash of dark hate after his father's ghost, almost believing that his father had truly foreseen the torment in which his son sat tonight.

"If you are going to hunt turmoil all the time, turmoil is going to begin hunting you," Arnold muttered.

"What—why did you say that?" There was a breathless catch in her voice, so slight that he was not sure that he had detected it at all.

"I'm sorry; I reckon I didn't aim to speak aloud. What did you think I said?"

He hardly ever spoke her name. He was too stiffly bound by convention to call her Jacqueline and he would not say Madame DuMoyne.

"Why—nothing. I thought for a moment that you had said something that might have applied to me. It was nothing at all."

He wanted to probe that a little way, but the anger that had been aroused by the reference to his friend had left a lassitude upon him.

"You're paler than usual," he said when he turned to her again.

"I'm tired of this place." Her tone was not one of weariness; in it there was a hint of something, uneasiness perhaps, that made her words meaningless.

"What's worryin' you here?" he asked suddenly.

She gave him a startled flicker of a glance; but her eyes were immediately calm as she looked up at him again.

"What makes you ask that?"

He shrugged. He thought—

"So something *is* worrying her."

He was curiously indifferent, absorbed in his own mental disorders.

"Don't answer if you'd rather not." He had sense enough to add, "Whatever it is, I want you to know I'm sorry."

"There's nothing worrying me."

He looked at her searchingly, and found her eyes upon him with an odd quiet intensity. She looked sober, almost sorrowful. In her pale face her eyes were dark and deep, and he possessed no lead-line for their fathoming. Some somber flame, he thought, was burning behind them. Its meaning he did not know, but he thought it was neither love nor hate; and it was too quiet for fear.

It seemed to him that he could not endure looking into her eyes, yet he could not look away. He freed himself with an almost physical wrench. The tumult of battle was in him, a battle over which hung the pall of coming defeat. He felt the desperate need of a drink, of a smoke.

"If you are going to hunt turmoil all the time—" The voice of his father, mouthing fatality.

No, he couldn't deceive himself. It was the woman he wanted. Her dark gown was close about her throat tonight; yet the white gleam of her shoulders tormented him, a memory clearer than vision. He wanted to press them with his lips.

He could turn and take her in his arms; but he intuitively believed that it would mean a defeat which he was by no means ready to bear. He suddenly got up. She looked surprized.

"You're going?"

"I've work to do. Got to get back to my boat."

"I never knew of a man working as you do."

"We're nearly done, now."

Just as he left she said—

"Please tell Mark I want to see him."

Her voice was quiet; but there was in it, he thought, something as pleading as a cry. His imagination, perhaps, but it was enough to send him into another fit of jealous rage. What could Mark do for her that he could not?

He strode up and down for a long time on the levee, waiting for some boat to get ready to take him to the *Frontier City*. He smoked furiously, champing at the delay.

At last he flung down the cigar butt, and tried to grind it out with his heel. It took refuge between the cobbles, and lay staring up at him with its one foolish eye. Huston sat down on a string-piece and rested his forehead on his hands.

"If you're going to hunt turmoil—"

## XVII

IT WAS about this time that Huston made his second visit to the swamp retreat of Walt Gunn. Certain supplies of molasses and cornmeal were three weeks late, and the riverman went to find out why.

As before, it was nine at night when he landed from an upriver boat at the foot of that scratch of a road marking Gunn's landing. The night was cold and raw for that latitude, with a whisk of rain in the air. A perpetual wind fled through the cottonwoods with a faint whistling moan that always sounded far away, yet grew neither nearer nor farther as he walked inland. Miles overhead a mat of vast scudding clouds was perceivable, but so dimly that it seemed they were felt, rather than seen. On the earth lay an inky blackness, thickest near the ground, from which it seemed to rise like fur twenty feet deep.

The night birds were silent this time over the planted lands, and there was not even the voice of a frog in the swampy bottoms where the river once had run. But from a mile away he heard the voices of Gunn's dogs, a continual wailing and belling in twenty keys, so that a man less conversant with hound talk would have thought a big hunt was in progress. It made him uneasy.

The back-water was high in the old river bed that lay between the Mississippi and the cabins of Walt Gunn. Huston was in some doubt as to whether he would be able to reach the place at all. Certainly there was no hope of shouting across the half-mile of muck jungle for a boat. He found the water lapping over the edge of the road through the swamp; but it had been built high and well. If Walt Gunn had nothing else he at least had plenty of labor at his command. His road stood against the sluggish water.

At the lowest point the filled road was submerged. The blackness was so thick here that it seemed tangible, but Huston felt his way ahead. He waded through knee-deep water, knowing that at any minute the edge of the road might cave under him, sending him into soupy mud over his head. In the dark he splashed directly into the kingpost of the drowned bridge, hurting his knee. After that the road raised a little. Slogging in the mud, he reached the steep rise that had been the river's farther bank.

In the time that he had spent working his way over the last half-mile of swamp road the belling of the hounds had never ceased. It rose to a clamor as he climbed the rise, the poorer of the hounds breaking out of their long tonguing into frantic barkings and yelpings. He could hear a whole row of them on the crest of the rise ahead of them, and though he could not see them he knew they watched his approach. They gave back as he advanced.

The dark was impenetrable among Gunn's invisible cabins. Not a pinpoint of light, not a suggestion of the outline of a building was discernible.

"Hi!" he shouted. "Any one home?"

No answer. He advanced slowly, feeling for the path, trying to remember exactly where Gunn's own cabin had been. The hounds retreated, maintaining a timorous distance, while their mad soprano bellowing killed even the sound of the wind. One deeper throat sounded over all the rest. Its interminable variations seemed never in need of breath, as if the dog were desperately pouring out some mournful explanation.

"*Howp, howoowhoop, yipoohoop, hooowowp, oooo—*"

"Hullo! Hey! Walt Gunn!"

Still no response out of the inky black. He went forward, shouting; and presently his groping hands found the lean-to's door. There he stood for a while, calling and kicking the boards. The splash through the swamp had been long and disagreeable; he was loath to turn back without result. He determined to enter the cabin, strike a light, and make himself at home pending the return of some one who could at least give him information as to Gunn's whereabouts.

Nevertheless, he did not step into Gunn's lean-to without some hesitation. The gun-barrel that had jabbed into his middle the last time he had done so was clear in his memory. He half expected a recurrence of the incident, and his stomach muscles tightened as he crossed the threshold.

As he disappeared within the cabin the howling of the hounds diminished. On the outskirts of the cabin group they still gave tongue in long wails, as dogs howl at the moon; but they were quiet enough so that he could have heard even a small sound within.

The inner door was partly out of line with the door of the lean-to, and Huston crashed into the jamb. An oath escaped him before he could collect himself again.

"Walt Gunn!" he called. "It's Huston! Are you there?"

Groping with one hand, he started to step in. Instantly a crashing explosion rocked him back upon his heels. Buckshot screamed past him, splintering the door jamb of the lean-to, rattling away into the foliage thirty yards beyond.

Huston's spring aside was purely instinctive. As he recovered from the daze of the shock he found himself flattened against the wall of the cabin, his pistol in his hand. Yet his reason had had no more part in putting him into that position than as if he had been lifted there by the heavy breath of the shotgun that had so nearly accounted for him.

His first emotion, when his hair had settled to his scalp again, was one of hot anger. He speculated for a moment or two as to what he should do, meantime listening for some stir of sound within the cabin that would tell him what his assailant meant to do next. Then he jammed his pistol back into the shoulder holster under his arm and stepped squarely into the opening of the door.

"Well, you damned fool," he said, his voice quivering with rage, "why don't you let go with the other barrel?"

No answer came out of the dark. The interior exhaled a faint breath of burned gunpowder, mingling with a remembered smell of coffee-grounds, old food and sweat. But Huston could not hear so much as the stirring of a rat.

"I told you who I was," he went on loudly, "before I came to the door. You'll kill somebody with your damned foolishness one of these days." No answer, no rustle of movement. "Well," he shouted, "are you going to answer me or not?"

The eery silence within remained unbroken. He produced a match; his fingers were trembling nervously as he ripped it along the wood. The match was wet, and its spongy head scraped off like damp bread, leaving a green streak of phosphorus glowing on the door jamb in the dark.

His impatience keyed to the breaking point as he failed with a second and a third. His bravado ebbed away, and he stiffly moved out of line with the door. As he stood with his back against the square-hewn logs of the wall he considered the advisability of carrying his investigation further. Reason counseled retreat.

Ahead of him was a pitch-black hole of a room, from which he had already been fired upon without cause. It was not his cabin; conceivably he had no business in it without invitation. Walt Gunn, or whoever had fired upon him, was more than likely in a state of drunken insanity. Yet as he considered withdrawing he became aware that this in itself was a dangerous course. He decided he must finish what he had begun.

One by one he tested the matches. There were a half-dozen left. If they failed he would be faced by the task of walking into that black silent dark without a light. There were three left. There were two. The next to the last match flared, hissed, died—then sprang into flame again, and burned.

Instantly Huston stepped forward into the doorway.

"Easy, now," he said, "easy!"

Immediately before him was the table; on it a dirty, huddling shirt; a pile of clothes were mounded in one corner. But there was no one there.

That was all he saw before the match burned his fingers. He hastily lighted the last match from the waning flame of the other, and held it high in cupped hands. On the rough plank that served as a mantelpiece stood a candle. Hurriedly, cuddling the feeble flame of the match stick in his hands, he stepped across the room and lighted the wax.

By its light he perceived that there was a great ragged hole in the shirt upon the table; through it the muzzle of a shotgun glinted dully. He tossed the shirt aside. On the table lay that massive Bible that Gunn's hands had gripped and fondled the night of their conference. Across it the shotgun lay, braced by heavy nails and lashed down with leather cords. From the trigger ran a string, cunningly rigged and concealed, as if by a trapper's hands. His eye traced it to the doorway, where the end of it dangled, broken.

Huston cursed in utter exasperation. There was a slab door in the back wall, with a hole in it that might have been intended for espionage. He supposed that he was being watched.

"Well, come on out!" he ordered. "D'you think I waded that damned swamp to stand here and be stared at?"

He persisted in regarding the gunplay as childish, unworthy of respectful treatment. He gave the rear door a terrific kick that would certainly have broken the nose of the watcher, had there been one. The door slatted open, revealing a back room that was smellier, if anything, than the one in which he stood. A cot, a stove, a broken chair, a cupboard, a litter of miscellaneous rubbish, were all it contained. Huston walked through it and stood in the back door, swearing.

Outside the night seemed blacker than ever, after the temporary relief of the light. As his eyes became a little accustomed to the dark he could make out the ragged line of the tree-tops beyond, blacker than the pit-like sky. At the foot of the trees he thought he could detect a slight stirring of darkness where the hound pack shuffled itself, lurking on the extreme outskirts of his vision. Their weird yelling droned on without haste, without weariness; those dogs were professional at that sort of work.

A shapeless form came writhing swiftly along the ground toward him, no more recognizable than some strange thing in a sack. Then the mystery came into the dim shaft of candlelight from the door, and materialized into a great, floppy hound-bitch. She wallowed, slathering to his feet with whimpers that were suppressed howls. When he spoke kindly to her she moved close against his legs, never ceasing her deep-throated whines.

He turned back into the cabin in search of a lantern. The great floppy bitch crouched on the threshold trembling and belling hollowly in her throat. Huston found a certain comfort in her presence, useless as he knew she would be to him in any conceivable circumstance. She provided at least the companionship of a living and comprehensible thing. A certain sympathy for her was compelled by the fact that she had come seeking him as a friend.

"Come in here," he commanded.

The big loose-knit hound put one foot forward reluctantly; then drew back and turned away her face, low-headed with shame that she disobeyed him, but fearing some other thing more.

He found the lantern he sought, and with the stick of a burned match transferred a flame to it from the candle's tip. Then he strode out the rear door toward the slave quarters. The dog slunk close to his legs, whimpering and nudging his knee repeatedly with her nose. So importunate was she that Huston thought the dog wished to take him to something; but when he stopped and asked her to lead the way she sat down, apparently desirous of nothing from him but the reassurance of his approval.

One advantage was brought to him by the hound-bitch. Her dog-talk drew a great hulking mongrel from the ranks of the skulkers, a silent brute with a cold yellow eye and a perpetually bristling roch on his shoulders. This dog accompanied them at a little distance with suspicious snufflings. But at each of the cabins at which Huston paused the mongrel took the lead, walked through the black open doorways ahead of him and for a few moments was lost to the lantern rays. He reappeared still bristling, still at a walk, but bearing the perfectly lucid information that the cabin was empty of life.

Huston made his way from one cabin to another, calling out, pounding on doors. His nose found the odor of unwashed negroes, molasses, old blankets and dogs; but human beings there were none. Sometimes, not trusting the word of the mongrel who went ahead, he explored the interiors of the cabins on his own account. He found evidences that breakfast had been cooked that morning, but no meal since.

By some subtle chain of observations, perhaps influenced by the uncanny quality of the night, he gathered an impression of haste and disordered flight. In one negro cabin a rude chair lay overturned; in another, on a crumby table, lay a square of corn-pone with one bite out of it, still showing the indentations of big teeth. Mice had been at it since. Across a threshold lay a pickaninny's doll, crudely made of a stick of wood, a strange little thing like an African idol; it lay disheveled, abandoned, but grinning toothily yet.

At the farthest edge of the clearing Huston stood for a bit, staring moodily off into the night. Beyond him was a tangle of live-oak and cottonwood undergrowth. The lantern light outlined a great down-sweeping live-oak limb, twisting, aged, thick as a man's body. It drooped downward until it almost touched the ground, apparently overborne by its own weight; then curved upward high into the night like some monstrous seeking snake. The bearding moss trailed downward from its bark, gray, filmy, like the dust-dry residue of centuries of tears. It swung limply in the little wind that came under the trees, so that beyond, in the faint yellow light of the lantern, certain shadows swayed and shifted stealthily, the dimmest stirring of something half perceived.

The big-boned mongrel walked on, his shadow lengthening ahead of him, distorted on the bare, sandy soil.

"Come back here!" Huston ordered. He had already decided to go no farther.

The yellow dog, choosing not to hear, went on with his stiff, unhurried strides. The whorls of hair on his haunches made them look ungainly, like a baboon's. He disappeared into the blackness, and did not return. There had been a certain detachment about that dog, even while he had been aiding Huston, as if he had slowly developing purposes of his own that were not to be suborned. The great hollow-throated bitch took a few steps after him, then sat down and howled once. She immediately returned to Huston and resumed her inconvenient proximity to his legs.

Huston felt ironically disgusted with the whole situation. Even so, as he passed one after another of the silent shanties he experienced a prickly sensation up and down his spine. He could not down the recurrent feeling that somewhere behind him a lurking enemy watched. Once he felt this so strongly that he turned and walked back to a cabin that he had passed, and entered its gaping door. A rat half the size of a cat leaped off a rickety table, plunked heavily on the slab floor and scuttled away. He knew by its presence that nothing else had been there, and he went on, swearing at himself.

The candlelight was still wavering in the cabin of Walt Gunn. When he had slammed the lantern on to the table with a jolt that nearly put it out, he lighted a lean cigar and sat down beside the table with crossed knees. The big bitch once more remained moaning at the rear door with wide-braced forelegs, ears nearly touching the ground. This time he put her from his mind, along with the incessant eery clamor of the hounds.

He sat for a long time with his hands thrust deep into his pockets, scowling out into the dark. It did not occur to him that the trap in which he had almost lost his life was not as good a place in which to sit and think as any other. He champed his lean cigar, rolled it from one corner of his mouth to the other with his tongue.

He was lost in thought when something stirred behind him in the corner of the cabin. It seemed a stealthy movement over the floor, warningly subtle, yet so magnified by the silence that had prevailed in the room that Huston thought of no other possibility than that a man had moved there. He was instantly on his feet, pistol in hand, facing the corner from which the sound had come.

Behind him the cabin was as empty as ever. In the corner that great lumpy mound of dirty clothing lay as before. It was something of a shock to him to find that no one faced him there. The disquieting idea came to him that some one was concealed under that disproportionately large pile of clothes. He took a quick step toward it, but instantly checked with a feeling of revulsion as he saw disappearing under the clothing the scaly, limp tail of a rat.

He blew a puff of breath at the guttering candle, and when it persisted to burn he swore and smashed it into a puddle of wax with the palm of his hand. Taking the lantern with him, he strode out toward the river road.

## XVIII

HUSTON caught a down-river boat a little before one o'clock.

The chill of the night had increased with the lateness of the hour. He got a blanket from his stateroom and flung it about his shoulders as he began his now almost habitual pacing of the guards. Astern to the hot oily breath of the engine-room ladder; forward to the bow rail; astern again.

The Mississippi spread black under a starless sky. The inky line of the shores, a mile apart, could hardly be seen by the casual eye. But there was no fog, and no precautions had been taken to dim the boat's lights or the gleam from the fire-alley that reddened the ripples of the black water.

Here and there in the main hall of the cabin a turned-down lamp glowed yellowly; below on the main deck the coals of a few pine-knot braziers smoldered, waiting to be fanned into flame for the next landing, still glowing from the last. These gave the boat a dimly lighted existence in the blackness of the river, of a quality mournful beyond words.

There were few landings, and for hours the quiet of the boat was unbroken. The close-lipped poker players in the bar could not he heard. Not even the labor of the engines was audible up here on the boiler-deck, except the faint rattle of some loose bit of wood, a whisper that told off every fourth beat of the stroke.

Here in the silence of the lightless Mississippi, Arnold Huston spent a long night. He dropped into a chair by the forward rail, after a while. He had more than enough to fill his thoughts.

Still river.

He was soon to have his own boat. It had been a long time now since he had stood on the hurricane deck, hearing the harsh carrying drawl of his own commands:

"Histe up! Let 'er go! Come on with your freight!"

His debt to his dead father, if there had been one, was gone with the *Peter Swain*. Her engines rusted deep in the muck; her charred timbers had gone down with the river to the all-obliterating salt green of the sea. Her bones were scattered, denied the grave that took what was left of a man, purposelessly holding it in one place. Yet she had had as much of a personality as any man, one that he was not likely to forget.

If ever he had anything again, it would be by the labor of his own brain, results given for value received. Nothing yet. Debts. Seventy-five hundred in paper to Mark Wallace, in return for a means with which to pay it back. That was the kind of load he could shoulder, though. At heart he had always felt a little defiant, had felt the need of being a little harder, because he had got his start in steamboating partly from an inheritance. Presumably a dead man has no preferences. But Anastasius Huston had despised the river while he lived.

Still river, sweeping down the weary miles to the sea.

Uprooted trees clutched for the mucky bottom with their limbs, became sawyer snags that fought the current, sometimes for years; then defeated, whirled on down to the sea with the rest.

Meantime his quarrel with the other branch of the family went on. Will Huston, fruitlessly suing for the hand of Caroline Shepherd, conceived in his bafflement that it was Arnold who stood in his way. There was a smile in that, but with it there was a threat. Mark Wallace was none too happy in the shadow of Will's financial enmity.

Will's immediate quarrel was based on a misconception, of course. It was doubtful whether his purpose would have changed had the occasion been removed. The enmity was too deep in the blood, always a brooding spark like a covered brazier, waiting for a breath to bring it into flame.

Now another mysterious threat rose, a threat no more clearly defined than the emptiness of the shadows about Walt Gunn's cabins. What situation lurked there no one could know—for awhile. It would come out soon, a scandal of some sort that could not be hid. Perhaps his very presence there on this night would involve him inextricably. Meantime, what should he tell Mark? Nothing. That Gunn had not been home.

Still river, perpetual, unhurried, taking its broad bends with a strong swing and pull.

Jacqueline DuMoyne. The thought of her was a besieging thing, forever seeking the unguarded moments of his mind as the vast river, defeatable at any point yet indomitable at all, perpetually felt for the weaknesses in the levees, waiting its chances until no more than a crawfish hole let a little of the tawny water through; then surging through the widening crevasse, sweeping all before it, drowning, scouring, punishing, carrying off on its flood. And when it was diminished in strength by the very destruction it had wrought, permitting itself to be shut out again for a little while, leaving behind the receding hungry waters a blank mud plain of desolation and despair.

It seemed to him that he would be satisfied never again to touch her hand, never to see her face, if only this bitter-hard work of his, this perpetual ebb and flow of battle for power on the river, could be diverted to her use. If she could be made happy by his labors, it seemed to him that labor for her would be joy enough.

He was weary. A vast labor of preparation, of circumvention, of numberless motions in the putting down of obstacles, gained only a minute advantage at the end of it all—an inch, on a road that stretched ahead a thousand miles. Yet it was a labor of emptiness, having no more to do with her than the labors of a plough-horse in the Indiana fields.

She had made a shell out of him, a meaningless thing going through intricate motions to achieve futile ends. It was as if his whole spirit had gone out of him to her. The empty shell provided the *Frontier City* with what it had needed; it satisfied the insatiable demands of MacMaugh. It was going to take to the river in a new boat.

Still river.

A man can't stay awake forever.

When he roused himself there was a silver of frosty dew on the blanket over his shoulders. The twisting river was running northward now. On its right the sky was mauve, violet and white gold. Nearer, on the left bank of the sweeping river lay New Orleans. A west wind took the long dark pall of the steamboat smoke to the other shore, leaving the city minutely clear across the Mississippi reaches. The low lying buildings were like flat cut-outs, looking bright and clean, pale violet against the dark western reflection of the dawn.

## XIX

A LITTLE after dawn a drenching rain began to fall, in a heavy downpour at first, then slacking off into a steady pelt that promised to last a week. It was the middle of the morning when Huston, delayed by errands in the town, at last reached the *Frontier City* where she lay on the far side of the river, opposite New Orleans. She was in the water now, and her engines were in—great iron monsters, twice the size of those she had had before. Two steam trials had been almost satisfactory, and MacMaugh and his mates were working on their last revisions.

Huston went directly to the boat's office in the forward part of the cabin.

Today, as he set his hand to the knob, he was given pause by such a hideous, muffled outcry from within as he would hardly have believed possible in a haunted house at night, let alone in gray daylight on his busy boat. In his astonishment he took an involuntary step backward; then, recovering himself, he thrust into the room.

In the middle of the carpeted floor lay the lank, high-hipped cat, stunned evidently, for the fluttering vibration of its ribs showed that it was not dead. Its head was such a mass of blood as to have been unrecognizable had it been seen alone.

In the best chair sat Mark Wallace, lounging with that habitual grace of his that made it seem impossible for him to take an awkward position. He was smoking with slow relish, and contemplating the ungainly lean body of the bloody cat. He glanced up as Huston came in, but did not appear disturbed. His sensitive face was quiet, composed. In his beautiful dark eyes some strange satisfaction glowed mistily, a keen hidden pleasure too fine-drawn to be called sensual, too languidly smoldering to be described in another way.

It was the expression Huston had seen fleetingly at the close of that fiasco of a duel, in the moment after Will Huston had fallen. It brought back the scene to him sharply, so that he could almost see the awkwardly sprawling figure, face down in the dirt under those brooding trees.

"What the devil have you been doin' to that cat?"

Wallace's answer, indifferently tossed off:

"Amusing myself. Kick the thing out into the hall."

Huston opened his mouth to speak, but found that he had nothing to say. He took the animal up by the skin of its back, and handed it to a mulatto cabin-boy in the hall.

"Wash that thing's head!" he ordered, thrusting the bleeding creature at the man so savagely that the negro started back.

"Sometimes," Huston said to Mark as he closed the door again, "I think I don't know you any better than I know the garfish under the boat."

"Cats are worthless," said Wallace indifferently. "I have no liking for cats."

"Is this the sort of thing you get out of your books?"

"I'm in no mood for accepting criticism of any kind whatsoever from you."

Wallace's voice was so incongruously mild that Huston glanced at him sharply. The delicate incomprehensible pleasure had disappeared from Wallace's face, leaving his eyes more coldly bleak than Huston had ever seen them. A hint of some sort of danger came into the cold-drenched air of the cabin.

"I'm here to tell you," Wallace went on, "that you sail tomorrow, not Saturday as you had supposed."

"Impossible," said Huston flatly.

"Tomorrow's Friday. That shorts you only twenty-four hours. You'll have to arrange it."

"I told you it was impossible," Huston repeated.

"I'm not interested in impossibilities. I'm only telling you what has to be done. If you don't know how to get things accomplished that is no fault of mine."

"You haven't any notion of what you're talkin' about!"

"I respond to that," said Wallace, his voice softening almost to a purr, "by pointing out that you are rapidly proving yourself an ignorant fool."

Huston was not angry yet; only puzzled, and somewhat condescending to his friend's petulant whim.

"Just where is the necessity for all this, Mark?"

"Quite of your own making. Since you found it desirable to brawl with your cousin over a towheaded girl in Mandeville, you thereby put us in a damned precarious position. I—"

"What the devil—"

"I mean to say I've spent a very pretty two or three days preventing about ten thousand dollars' worth of our notes being called."

"But if you prevented it—"

"Momentarily," Wallace qualified, biting his mustache. "I've saved our hides for the present by nothing in the world but face. If we get the boat into the river and earning something, we may still be able to pull through."

"Still be able to pull through? It's as bad as that, is it?"

"Exactly."

A wave of anger swept Huston.

"Then you're a damned sight weaker manager than you give yourself credit for!" he growled. "The first breath of opposition finds you shakin' in your shoes. If that dough-faced cousin of mine really comes out with somethin' I suppose you'll curl up and quit like a cold-blood."

"I think not," said Mark incisively. "I'm holding up my end against a network of factors that you haven't the background to understand, even if I were interested in explaining it to you. Satisfy yourself that you pulled it down around our heads, that's all."

"Rubbish," Huston retorted. "D'you want me to come up and run your end of it too?"

"I think you'd better learn your own end first. It seems to me, my friend, that I've supplied nothing less than everything this enterprise has had put into it so far. The first call on you for anything but the most mediocre effort has come now. Twenty-four hours' time looks a good deal like the line between success or failure. You sit there mouthing, 'Impossible!'"

Huston was furious; but he held himself in check.

"Now you just make up your mind to pull yourself together," he told Mark harshly. "I'm not interested in your yellow streaks. The installation plans are not goin' to be changed; they couldn't be even if your silly notions were correct. Meantime I have work to do. The boat leaves for Vicksburg Saturday."

"Whether she leaves before then or not, she certainly is not going to move Saturday."

"What do you mean?"

"There's a bankruptcy petition in the offing, my friend."

"We're no more bankrupt than—"

"Certainly not," Wallace interrupted bitingly. "That has nothing to do with the situation. It is a mere excuse upon which to base an injunction which will prevent the *Frontier City* from leaving her slip."

"If the petition is baseless, you'd better concern yourself in whipping it, and not—"

"You can't very well down the thing before it comes up. If I hadn't had underground wires out, I wouldn't know about it at all. Their play is to delay, and delay, whittling us down until they're ready; then they'll break us like squeezing an egg."

"Who the hell is 'they'?"

"Will Huston's crowd. Their injunction will be timed to the hour; there's such a thing as owning judges, you know, as well as boats. At best it would take perhaps a week to lift; at worst it'll drag on and on until they get something else to hold us with. They know to the rivet how far you've got with the remodeling of the *Frontier City*. Evidently they know you, too. They rest in confidence," he closed with cold sarcasm, "that nothing is likely to induce you to make a quick move."

Huston's lean cheek bones were scarlet.

"Why didn't you say so in the first place?" he exploded. "You're goin' to go too far with me, Mark!"

There was a silence in which they sat looking at each other. Outside the silver-gray rain pattered ceaselessly on the deck. It fell upon the river in a steep unvarying slant, with a steady wet whispering that lay as an impalpable background for all other sounds. Mark relaxed into a smile. His smile always had a suggestion of the beautiful in it, the subtly sensitive muscles of his face seeming capable of no other kind, regardless of the meaning behind the expression.

"There's no need for us to quarrel," he said gently enough. "If we are going to fail, we're going to fail, and we may as well take it smiling."

"We're not goin' to fail," said Huston.

But there was such an absence of conviction in his voice that Wallace glanced at him sharply. The gray weariness had returned to Huston's face with the passing of his anger. His eyes were heavy and cold.

"Our success or failure," Mark Wallace said, "will depend on your activity. Or rather, upon us both equally."

"That's a new idea to you, I take it," Huston commented dryly. "A minute ago you said—"

"I spoke in haste," Mark conceded. "I've been under a very considerable strain, Arnold. It's up to me to accomplish certain difficult things; and it's up to you to get our boat into the water. We've got to pull together, Arn, and pull damned hard!"

Huston saw no need for an answer to this. He sat relaxed, staring glumly out into the gray rain.

"You haven't told me," Mark suggested, "when the boat will move."

"Friday," said Arnold dully. The shadow of a smile widened his mouth. "Every nigger on the boat will jump over the side."

"Oh, I don't think so."

"The extra work will cost more, you know."

"I see that we can't avoid that."

They seemed to be on their old footing again. Arnold, harsh-tongued himself, was not inclined to remember the bitterness that had risen between them a few minutes before.

"Arn," said Wallace, "it'll be a relief to us both, and to you especially, I know, when this boat leaves the levee. The worst of this will soon be over, old man—far as you're concerned. I know you've worked yourself plumb to hell and back again, but—"

"I'm not tired."

"Yes you are. You're as near under as I ever saw you, except that time after the burning of the *Peter Swain*. It shows in every muscle you've got. I know you've worried a good deal about the steamboat, but—"

"Hell, Mark, do you think I'm so poor at my job that a few details in gettin' a boat ready can put me under?"

Wallace said directly—

"What's worrying you, Arn?"

Huston decided not to answer that. He stared off into the slanting shimmer of the rain, and half-smiled as he saw through Mark Wallace's questionings. His friend seemed to him singularly shallow, that his apparent concern should be so transparent. He saw that Mark regarded him merely as a factor in certain plans of his own. If some hidden thing were worrying Huston, it was to Wallace's interest to find it out, or at least to ascertain its nature. Huston wondered what underground machination Mark suspected him of. It was stupid of Wallace, he thought, to try to draw confidences on the heels of their quarrel.

His face sobered. He sat contemplating his own desolate plight as distantly as if Mark Wallace had been ten miles away. And thus, while it was still in his mind that Wallace was a stupid questioner, Mark trapped him.

"I saw Jacqueline DuMoyne today," Mark said.

"I wish to Christ," Huston burst out, "that you'd never taken me there!"

A swift chuckle, light and amused, brought Huston to earth.

"So that's all it is!"

"What d'you mean?"

"I thought maybe you had got yourself twisted into some underground rannykazoo. With Walt Gunn, for instance." Wallace was watching Huston's face.

"Yes?" Arnold's tone was cold and level.

"It's really a relief to me," Mark went on lightly, "to know that this spectacle is only the result of your falling in love."

Huston passed over 'this spectacle' as he had passed over the reference to Walt Gunn.

"You don't seem surprized," he said evenly.

"She told me," Mark said, "that she thought you were falling in love with her." Huston stirred. Wallace was going on, "She wanted to know what to do. I told her to let you—it would do you good."

"In what way?" Huston asked in a muffled voice.

"I told her I thought it would take some of the damned stiffness out of your neck to come a good sound cropper."

"I thought—" Huston began. In the room before his eyes there was a shimmer like that of the outer rain, but he steadied himself and let his lids droop. "I thought—I had the idea that you had some interest in that quarter yourself."

"In your affairs? An entertained spectator, my child."

"In hers," Huston corrected him.

"Indeed?"

"I mean I thought you had plans of your own." With a flash of diplomacy he added, "Since you have not, of course that frees my hands."

"It happens that I do have plans of my own."

"Yet you suggested to her that she lead me on?"

"Say rather I advised her that it was hardly worth while to discourage you in the early stages."

"You give me a *carte blanche* then, as far as you're concerned?"

Huston believed that his anger was now so under control that he could meet Wallace's eyes without revealing it. Something akin to a cold shudder ran over him as he did so; he saw the same quiet face, the same sultry smolder of amusement in the dark eyes with which Mark had gazed at that ghastly cat.

"I don't see that it is my place to give or withold *carte blanche* on anything," Mark said.

"I think," Huston told him, "that your detachment is the best compliment you could pay me." He was feeling a keen revulsion for this odd man with the fine eyes and the beautiful smile.

"Don't deceive yourself," said Mark. "You'll never go farther with this than I think useful to my interests."

"If you're speaking of your priority rights," said Huston, angrily in spite of himself, "I say there's no consideration comin' to you."

"I think you'll not find me asking for anything."

"You think it's impossible," said Huston, his voice quivering with suppressed fury, "that you should lose out?"

"Not at all."

"Then you mean—"

"I mean that if ever I find you in my way I'll break you with no more compunction than I would any one else."

"You think you could, do you!"

"Recall, my friend, that you were a pauper when I picked you up. You'll be a pauper again when I say the word. Everything that you have is by my sufferance. I had purpose in view when I gave you your chance. The fact that I was a fool to pick you, with your silly row on with your bastard brother, is beside the point. You're part owner of a steamboat—if you don't lose the steamboat—as long as I say you are. When I choose otherwise you'll be seventy-five hundred in my debt by your note of hand, and owner of nothing."

"The contract prevents that, I think!"

"Read it again." Mark Wallace rose, and began drawing on his gloves. "You'd better be getting at your work."

Into Huston had welled such a blind tumult of fury that he scarcely knew what he did or said. He felt himself slowly rise from his chair, his muscles taut springs.

Mark took a step backward, but the wall was there. Then the fingers of Huston's left hand twisted themselves into the pleated throat of his shirt and he was jammed against the bulkhead. Wallace's face went white. There was the tinge of terror in the shock of his fury as he found his voice.

"This is preposterous! What is the meaning of this?"

Still the gleaming smile on Huston's face, the slow twist of his fingers in the neckband of the shirt. Wallace's face began to darken with the tightening check of the blood. He became dizzy and a wild panic swept into him.

He screamed—

"Let go you fool!"

His knuckles flailed in a sudden desperate struggle, but Huston's hand was like steel. Even as his eyes darkened and the terror of futility crushed him his mind was at work. He stopped struggling, and though he sagged as if he would fall he looked directly into Huston's mad eyes. He heard Huston say—

"You poor cowardly fool, you'll never be master of any situation that I happen to be in!"

Then he saw the madness in Huston's eyes give way to a gleam of triumph, and a certain ironic amusement. The fingers slackened at his throat, so that he could get his breath again.

"You'll fight me for this!"

Huston laughed in his face.

"No, I'm tired of fightin' cowards."

That irresistible hand flung Wallace staggering toward the door.

"Get out! Stay out! I've work to do."

TO BE CONTINUED

# The Dignity of Prayer

BY

HARRY A. FRANCK

THE WHEEZING old steamer on which I had taken deck-passage to Alexandria was churning slowly towards the mouth of the canal, leaving Port Said behind. Most of the Mussulmans, who constituted my fellow-passengers had finished *asr*, or afternoon prayer, and were squatted again in closely packed groups about the deck. One belated follower of the prophet, however, had just stepped out of his slippers and stood barefooted on his outspread cloak, on his face the I'm-on-my-best-behavior-Don't-try-to-make-me-smile expression of a Fifth Avenue footman on parade. So exactly had he orientated himself that a line drawn straight before him would have fallen directly across the Kaaba, in the holy city of Mecca.

Before he had touched his forehead to the deck for the third time, however, the ship, passing the mouth of the canal, had set a course due west, and the worshipping Arab was making his salaams toward some imaginary shrine in Siberia. His co-religionists looked on horror-stricken; a startled whisper passed among them. What could be done? Should they violate the eternal law against disturbing a believer at his prayers, or leave him to risk infernal perdition unwarned? Here was no place for procrastination, bred though that failing be, in the bone of the Oriental.

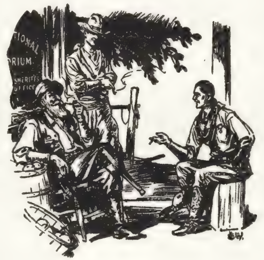
A powerful, gaunt Bedouin from the north, a radical among conservatives—his face bore witness—stepped boldly forth, caught the worshipper by the elbows, and turned him half round. Not a muscle of the devotee's face betrayed him, not for the briefest glance were his eyelids lifted, not a word of the mumbled formula faltered on his lips.

The fearless Bedouin squatted again among his fellows. The worshipper continued his genuflections through the thrice times three prostrations; stood a moment stiffly erect, with crossed hands. Then suddenly returning to the prosaic life of today, he wrapped his prayer-rug about his shoulders, in its intended capacity, and raised his eyebrows at the throng about him. With one accord its hundred component parts stretched their right hands toward the Bedouin from the north.

The belated worshipper stalked across the deck, laid a hand on the shoulder of the Bedouin, and offered profuse yet undemonstrative thanks.

F. R. BUCKLEY *tells of a hard-bitted sheriff of the Old West*

# Machiavelli Peg-Leg



I DON'T know how it can have come to pass, but actually there seems to have sprung up a superstition to the effect that I, William Garfield, sheriff and sole maintainer of the peace in Three Pines County, am a person of violent and bellicose habits.

The average stranger, surveying me at my height of five feet six, and at my age of seventy-eight, may well say, "Not really!" But I assure him that such is the fact. Noticing my peg-leg, my whiskers, my general store and my general expression of benevolence, the said stranger may be excused for adding, "It don't seem possible!" or words to that effect; yet I beg to reiterate that it is not only possible, but true. Just because in the course of my legal duties I have occasionally needed to deal firmly with firm-dealing jaspers younger and larger than myself, and because I have endeavored to keep order among the cowpunchers who come to eat fruit at my International Emporium and Sheriff's Office on Saturday afternoons, the local population has got the idea that my only pleasure in life lies in ramming peoples' heads against rocks, shooting them through the mazzard or fracturing their wrists with my octagonal-knobbed stove-poker.

Whereas as a matter of fact nothing could be farther from the truth. When rash young lads start to be rough with a poor old man like me, naturally I have to try to be rough in return, and it's possible that I succeed pretty good; but when left to myself and not interfered with in any way, nobody is milder nor more addicted to the ways of peace than I am. It is no exaggeration to say I would sooner sue a guy than shoot him; and if I don't like a jasper, I would much rather deal with him by word of mouth than by bullet of revolver. The former hurts more.

But as a general instance of my preference for peaceful tactics, I will now recount the story of Eric Wilson and his friend Joe Scott.

These two boys, as no doubt many local readers will remember, turned up in company to take jobs at the Lazy F Ranch; which jobs they had secured by writing from Laredo when the Triangle Bar, which had formerly employed them, was absorbed into the Combine. They were bosom friends, and they arrived so late at night that it was no use their trying to make the Lazy F before morning; so I told them that if they didn't mind and had fifty cents between them, they could share the bed I usually keep for corpses, and have breakfast with me for another quarter each.

"It's very kind of you to invite us to stay, Mr. Garfield," says Mr. Wilson, who was a handsome guy in a blue silk neckcloth.

"It's refreshing to find an example of the old Texan hospitality still surviving in these days of commercialism. The only thing that occurs to me is this—that I never sleep well when I'm not alone. I don't know why—it's funny; I suppose I have a very sensitive nervous system—"

Well, he had a charming smile and nice teeth also; and nobody, as you can see for yourself, could have been more affable, if as. But nevertheless, his jaw-hinges had been too well oiled for my liking, and I was just going to remark that he could sleep in the corral if he insisted on so doing, when Joe Scott broke in.

"Sure, Ek," says he, this evidently being Eric's pet name. "I can fix myself up a shake-down on the floor."

"It's a hard floor," says I.

Joe Scott didn't say anything. Silence seemed to be rather his long suit—silence and self-sacrifice.

"There are nails in it," I continued, "and the allowance of blankets is limited."

Still he said nothing; and so eventually he had his way, after an evening spent by Eric Wilson in fascinating discourse and by Scott and me in a more or less depressed silence. I figure I was more depressed than Scott was, because occasionally I like to chat a little myself, whereas this young man seemed perfectly content to sit and listen to the conversation of his gifted side-kicker. He sat in a dark corner, and smoked cigarets and drank in Eric Wilson's flowing periods like he was listening to the Prophet Isaiah.

"Of course," says the golden-tongued boy orator, when he had dealt with the free silver, tariff, negro voting, prohibition, immigration and free range questions, and when at last the clock marked 10 P. M., "a man of your age, Mr. Garfield, taking you as a relic left over from a past generation—"

"—wants to go to bed," says I rudely; and went there.

I lay awake long enough to hear Wilson catch his spurs in Scott's carefully-arranged shake-down and scatter it all over the floor; to his curses about which Scott replied:

"S'all right, Ek. Sorry. Don't matter. I'll make it up again."

And then I fell asleep.

That's all I have to say in introduction of these two young men, except more to the same effect, viz: that when I came down next morning to earn my twenty-five cents by providing their breakfasts, I found that Joe Scott had already cooked Ek Wilson's and mine, and was just about to start cooking his own.

Also, that when the boys' departure for the Lazy F put an end to Wilson's discourse on the best methods of bull-breeding, I went out to the kitchen only to find that Scott had employed the odd quarter of an hour in washing the dishes.

## II

AND AS things had started, so they continued—which is a habit they have, unless there is somebody about who knows how the course of events should run, and is capable of keeping circumstances in their proper channel by brute force. I am such a somebody, but when I say "brute force" I don't mean anything to do with peg-legs or revolvers or similar coarse tools. You will see what I do mean in a minute; but in the meantime, let me state that both Eric Wilson and Joe Scott fell heavily and immediately in love with the daughter of old Colonel Sanderson of the Bar T outfit; and that Wilson, ere a week was out, appeared to be winning in a walk.

And why not? I ask you. Wasn't he designed by nature to be the idol not only of all the available ladies, but also of ninety-nine per cent. of the males, who might have been expected to know better? Wasn't his hair curly, and couldn't he make his eyes flash? And didn't he always have Scott along to deputize on any work? Yea, verily.

"Yes," says poor Joe Scott, when he came over one day, and I mentioned his pal to him, "a muslin sack of the usual, please. He's one of fortune's favorites all right, Mr. Garfield. Suppose you and me had been born like that, eh?"

"Let's don't," I begged, having just had my lunch. "How is he gettin' on with Mabel?"

Mr. Scott smiled bravely, but there was a wrinkle about half an inch above his left eyebrow. This gave me my first idea that his heart was, after all, stronger than his hallucinations.

"Fine!" says he. "Of course, Mabel herself ain't in the matter so much yet awhile."

"No?" I asked with some surprize.

"No," says Joe Scott, sighing and staring at a mineral-water calendar, "no. She's such a soft little wind-flower of the prairie, Mr. Garfield, that us rough men that would make her our own must—"

"Us?" I inquired.

"Him, I mean," stutters Scott. "What I mean—er—"

"Yeah," says I. "What you mean is that Wilson's butterin' the Old Man up before he starts on the girl. But what I'd like to know is how he's workin' the hypnosis on a gruff-voiced, parade-rasping old martinet like that."

"Oh," says Scott, "Wilson gets on fine. You know, Ek was in the Army during the war."

"What regiment?"

"I don't know," says Scott, "he's so modest. But I don't think he was in an ordinary regiment at all. I think he had some very important detached duty—something 'way up."

"Fifteenth floor of the remount depot, most like," I suggested. "How about yourself?"

"Oh, I was just a doughboy; an' not a very good one at that."

"How so?"

"Oh, well, I was back in the base hospital about half my time. If there was a machine-gun nest within a mile, I'd go an' blunder into it an'—"

"How about the machine-gunners?" I asked.

"Oh, well—" says Scott regretfully.

So we had a moment of silence for the heroic dead, and would have had another for Scott's Congressional Medal of Honor if I'd known about it; and then I said—

"So you don't seem to cut much ice with old Sanderson, eh?"

The boy started up as if I'd stuck a pin into him.

"Me? Oh no. I never try to," he protested. "You seen for yourself what a fascinating guy Wilson is—"

Meeting my gaze, he swallowed something.

"I'm—er—I'm thinkin' of leaving these parts pretty soon, Mr. Garfield," says he. "You know what I mean. Wilson's the only guy that's ever taken much notice of me—I'm kind of a dumb ox; an' now he's gettin' kind of occupied with the Colonel an' Ma—Miss Sanderson—"

"Don't you boys go over to the Bar T together?"

"Oh yeah, but—"

"But the conversation don't seem to include you?"

"No. Not much. You see, I got nothin' to say."

"Sit alone by yourself all evenin'?"

"Miss Mabel generally brings her sewing an' sits near me," says Scott, evincing a desire to bury his head in his hands, "but I dunno what to say to her either, beyond that it's a fine night, which it generally ain't. I kind of can't help listenin' to Wilson—he talks like a book, you know, Mr. Garfield; so interestin'. The Colonel thinks he's the most intelligentest man that ever trod the soil of Texas. And so he is."

"Son-in-law, then?" says I.

Poor Scott failed to suppress a violent shudder.

"Well, I don't know," says he, his eyes filming over and his voice appearing to issue from a throat partly obstructed by a large green-gage. "That's a pretty big order Mr. Garfield. When it's the sweetest little woman in God's country; the fairest—"

"Yeah!" says I hastily, getting him out of his trance with a prod in the ribs. "Yeah—when all that's at stake, what next?"

"Well, it's a big order," says Scott lamely. "Wilson ain't said anythin' yet —even to me—but his eyes have spoken for him."

"My Lord," I demanded, "ain't there no part of that man that don't talk?"

"But the Colonel," says Joe miserably, "ain't goin' to leggo his desert rose to the first comer. Intelligence may be all right, but he wants more. He's a-selectin' her mate with care, with lovin'—"

"Does Wilson ever show any interest in the Colonel's health?" I demanded suddenly.

Scott came out of another trance.

"N-no," says he. "Just goes up and takes him by the hand an' tells him he looks not more than forty-five."

"Why don't you do similar?" I asked. "It's no use actin' as if you weren't in love with Mabel, because you are. And take your forehead off my cash-register. You're perspiring with agony, an' you'll rust it."

"How could I tell the old guy such lies?" demanded Scott without obeying my last injunction. "He looks more like ninety to me. I ain't got no social sense—never had. Never will have."

"But what if I was to promise you that you'd be Mabel's mate, as you call it," I inquired, "an' not Wilson?"

"Wha-a-a-a-t?" gasps Scott, recovering miraculously. With eyes that shone like newly-polished door-knobs, he stood in ecstasy for a moment; and then he looked at me, and what do you think he said? Even he had heard this slander about my violence, and he spoke of the same. I nearly chucked his case up on the spot.

"Look here," says he, "I can't have any injuries done to my pal, Mr. Garfield. No framing him up with a felony and knocking the daylights out of him."

"Why—" I broke in indignantly.

"I mean, no dropping of hams on his head out of the rafters, or stunning him with a chair, or making him fall down cellar stairs or fire a double-barreled ten-gage duck-gun at himself," says Scott, alluding to several episodes which nobody regrets more than I do.

"Get out of here," says I, resolving to be patient and demonstrate to the boy his error in estimating my character. "Good afternoon!"

## III

WELL, of course he was careful to tell me, before leaving, that I must be out of my mind. And then, during the whole of the next week, he added insult to injury by riding over every day to recount the amazing progress Wilson was making in old Colonel Sanderson's esteem.

"The best man's winning, like I told you he would!" says Mr. Scott on about his fifth visit, and in a triumphant manner slightly marred by the audible breaking of his heart. "I told you you were talking through your hat, Mr. Garfield!"

"Yeah," says I, biting off an end of thread and continuing to patch my pants, "but you didn't mention that you had four certificates from the Humane Society, did you, now?"

"Don't try to change the subject," says Mr. Scott, blushing. "I'd like you to apologize for saying that Miss Sanderson could possibly be mixed up matrimonially with a man of my caliber. No doubt you were under the influence of drink at the time, and I am not disposed to be severe—"

"Nor me," I told him. "Get out now!"

"Of course," says the poor goof hopefully, but going toward the door nevertheless, "if you had any real good reasons for making such a statement—"

"Good afternoon," says I. "And if anybody's going to commit suicide on me, it had better be the girl's almost-fiancé."

"If I bring *him* over," says Scott. "I don't know what will happen."

"Bring him and see," says I. "Good afternoon!"

So he brought him; but not to demand explanations—merely to ask if, as I had alleged, I could supply diamond solitaire engagement-rings cheaper than the great New York jewelry firms. Of course, I can't, but I had alleged it. Am I not writing this narrative to show there's more to me than mere muscular agility and quickness on the draw?

"I didn't think," I told Wilson, while exhibiting a catalog sent me in 1901, "that matters had got quite to the ring stage yet."

"Well, to be quite truthful," says the handsome young man, delicately licking his finger and turning to the four-carat section, "I have not yet thought it advisable to put the question to the young lady herself, Mr. Garfield. Possibly you are not acquainted with the method in vogue among families of aristocratic European extraction in the arrangement of these things—especially where, as in this case, a large quantity of land and similar real property, at present entailed upon the heirs-male—"

"The method consists in soft-soaping the male ancestor, huh?" says I.

"Well, certainly, the favorable—"

"And Sanderson isn't quite ready to slip yet, ain't he?"

"I shouldn't exactly put it in that manner, but—"

"That's what you mean, ain't it? Well, listen. You understand that there's a bit of profit on these diamond rings."

"My dear Mr. Garfield—" begins the expansive young gentleman, waving one hand in the air.

"Well, I'd like to sell you one as quick as may be," I informed him brutally, though seeing in his eye that he'd decided to go to Laredo for the token. "Wherefore I tell you this. Your sidekicker says that never in the whole course of your going to the Lazy F have you asked the Colonel how he felt in himself, like, or gone into the question of his inflammatory rheumatism."

"Rheumatism?"

"He's a martyr to it. It's a regular hobby of his. He's always gettin' Doc Brewer over, an' experimentin' on himself with patent medicines. He spends hours and hours dosin' himself, an' he'd like to spend hours and hours more talkin' about how it feels and what he's doin' for it; but he don't dare any more, on account of everybody leavin' the moment he starts on his symptoms. Haven't you noticed the way he drags his left leg after him?"

"Yes, but I assumed—"

"He's trawling for inquiries," says I, winking, "an' the man who would go an' ask him how it was, an' not be put off by him sayin' he never had such a thing—of course, he's gun-shy these days; the man who'd go ahead and draw him out on the subject would make a hit. I say no more."

"You've said enough!" says Wilson, grabbing hold of my hand and shaking it. "I certainly will come to you for that ring! You know how it is, Mr. Garfield—a man may be all that's desirable, and yet not have that key—that little human passport to the heart of the person—"

"Yeah," says I. "Well, you try that. Good day."

"*Orryvwaw!*" replies Wilson in fluent French. "Come on, Scott. God bless you, Mr. Garfield!"

So they went.

I should like just here to remark that while before now I have had to shoot horses and drown dogs, and have seen their eyes fixed upon me during the processes—never have I seen such a gaze as was handed forth by J. Scott as he followed his friend through the door.

## IV

BUT HOW changed he was when next I saw him—Mr. Scott, I mean.

If you will believe me, he came vaulting on to my verandah over the railing and, having entered the store, he positively swaggered up to the counter and slapped me on the back.

"Well!" says he.

"Well indeed," I answered, swallowing my butt all the way down before it could burn me. "Well what?"

"She's going to marry me-e-e-e!" chants Mr. Scott, doing a few steps of the Charleston on my floor. "We were sitting together as usual, neither of us saying a word and she sewing—you know, last night, after we'd been over here to see you. Tra-la-la-lai-tu! And Wilson was talking to the Old Man, thick as thieves. All of a sudden, he said something, Wilson did; and the old Colonel bobbed up out of his chair and said—well, never mind what he said, tra-la! Something about Wilson's impudence. So Wilson said something else, and the Colonel got to be quite a bright purple color, and roared out, 'Go and read the history of your country, you young puppy! Go and read the history of your native land!'

"Tra-la-la! So Wilson said something else, and the Colonel reached for a gun, tiddley-push. Ooooo, merrily goes the time when the hea-a-a-rt is young, tra-la—"

"And then?" I asked, merely exhibiting the stove-poker.

"So I was going to rush between them," says Mr. Scott, "when of a sudden I felt two soft, sweet, rounded arms about my neck, Mr. Garfield, and I heard rose-petal lips whispering in my ear, 'Let him drill a hole in the nasty tango-lizard if he feels like it, Joey. You stay right here with me.' "

"M'm," says I, marveling at the vocabulary nice girls have these days. "And so—?"

"And so I stayed," says Mr. Scott. "Tra-la-la-lai-tu!"

"Yodeling is all very well," I remarked sternly, "but a few scattered thanks would be better."

"Thanks?" demanded Scott, breaking off amid a call to the summit of Mont Blanc and regarding me strangely.

"I won't insist on an apology for the way you suspected me of violence," I said, "but gratitude I should and will have."

"Gratitude?" gasps the affianced gent. "When only the other day—yesterday, by gosh—you were tellin' Wilson how to cold-cream the Colonel—"

"By asking him about his rheumatism," says I.

"Yeah!"

"The said Colonel having been, during the late war—I mean the Civil War," says I meaningly and slowly, "a Colonel in the recruiting, commissariat or graves registration departments. I dunno which; but anyhow, he spent a very pleasant war in Chicago, Illinois, and bought the Lazy F with the proceeds."

"Oh," says Mr. Scott less melodiously.

"It is indeed rheumatism, not to say gout, which causes him to limp so pathetically," says I, "but it is quite a passion of his to have the credit given to some ghastly gash gained in the service of his country. And since he owns most of the land and banks and things hereabouts, everybody but your friend Wilson has hitherto let it go at that."

"Oh!" says Mr. Scott again, and regarded me with considerable admiration. "And they told me, when I first came here, that you were a—"

"They were wrong," says I, reaching under the counter for a catalog that had come in that morning's mail. "I *am* a sheriff to be sure, and can act as such when required. But I am also a station-master, postmaster, commissioner of deeds, registrar of vital statistics and—most especially—the proprietor of this here International Emporium."

I spread out the catalog to its best advantage and fixed Scott with my glittering eye.

"Now that you have ceased to identify me exclusively with battle, murder, sudden death and similar necessary but unprofitable things," I suggested, "how about letting me take your order for a nice diamond solitaire ring?"

## *The Mystery of the Korin Screen*

# THE THUNDER GOD

WESTGAARD leaned back in his office-chair, his head against the framed photograph of some enormous States factory; his eyes, half closed, seemed interested only in watching the gray smoke of his cigaret turn to blue where it floated into sunlight.

He listened to the squeal of ill-adjusted brakes on the wet street below the offices of the Asiatic-Import and then said gently that it was surprizing how slowly Osaka's streets dried after a shower.

"I can't accustom myself to machines in Japan," he added, "but I suppose you do a nice business in them, Bill. It will be a long time before they come to my own province." He stretched his legs. "I've never driven one," he went on slowly. "I don't believe that I could. It's hard enough—" smiling—"for me to sit in a chair. All I can do to keep from squattin' on the floor."

Carstairs, Osaka manager of the A-I, listened carefully, saw nothing to answer and, worse, nothing to the point. So he repeated his original sentence, only no longer as an interrogation.

"You couldn't go for us," he said.

Westgaard's eyes, hazy blue-gray like the smoke, did not flicker.

"I haven't said a word—yet—about going or not going. I'm only trying to tell you to come clean, Bill." He balanced himself more precariously. "You're gettin' like your office, Bill. You've got a filin'-case mind. You tell me something just as you'd write it on an order blank."

The other man tried to find a way to meet Westgaard's preoccupied eyes and, after a pause, said swiftly:

"I've told you all I know, Andy. All. Every word. My orders came from the Old Man himself. He said, 'Send Westgaard.' I know it sounds like a fool business. I suppose it is foolish. And yet the boss insisted—"

"You might have told him that this is silk-buyin' season up my way, Bill. And you might have added that I'm no curio hunter."

"I didn't tell him—"

"No, you didn't tell him anything, Bill. That's why you're a manager here, old Bill." The dried-out Westgaard did not move, but added solemnly, "After all, I know I'm a sort of special ambassador for the A-I, but I ought to be allowed a little choice. You just tell the boss I'm not interested in fancy screens and let it go at that. Or I'll write him myself. Tell him one of the kids'll get it for him."

Carstairs fumbled with his watch-fob; his placid face—Westgaard had more wrinkles about his eyes than the other had in his entire countenance—showed actual distress.

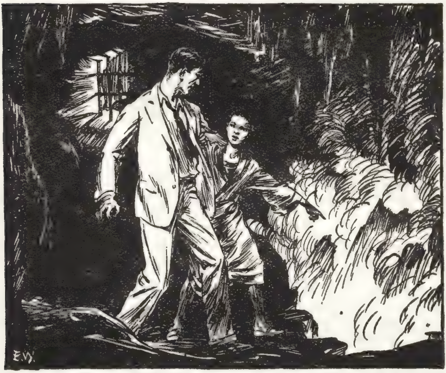
"I don't believe I dare," he admitted finally. "The Old Man said you. He seemed to have some special reason for sending you, or he wouldn't have had you come all the way from your district. He probably knows more than I do about it."

Westgaard shrugged.

# *A Complete Novelette*

*by*

## SIDNEY HERSCHEL SMALL



"Prob'ly does." He rocked the chair to the floor and stood up. "If he wants curios, tell him to go get 'em. Hanged if I'll dry-nurse any screen from some dingy temple to become the ornament in some woman's what-d'ye-call'em. That's that, Bill. *Shikata ga nai*—can't be helped."

Carstairs did not attempt to argue. Westgaard was one of the A-I pioneers; never before had the north-province man refused anything. Carstairs told the other that he didn't blame him, that it would be arranged differently, somehow.

"I don't mind doing it," Westgaard retorted, "but it's a fool's errand, Bill. If the Old Man thinks I'm gettin' old—*maskee*. If I do this, next week he'll want me to buy a pair of embroidered nightgowns for some tourist he knows—and I will not buy nightgowns."

He went to the window and opened it.

"Smells good after a little rain," he continued soberly.

Carstairs realized that this was the end of the Old Man's orders; he began to wonder if he should send some one else after the screen, or wire the head of the A-I for instructions. His orderly mind began to plan the letter.

The other's calm voice came to him—

"Funny how Osaka's changed since we came to the Orient. Can't get used to it. Hasn't chanced any when you get away from the cities, though. When I look down and see uniformed messenger-boys and trams and machines and bikes;

when I know that in this building there're desks and adding-machines and telephones, it's hard to remember that the Nishi Hongwanji is just around the corner, with its dogs of Fo and dragons and lanterns and gods and bronze bells—All a sign I'm gettin' old, Bill. Mere fact I talk so much proves it! An old-timer buyin' silk underwear embroidered with iris! Step-ins! Camisoles! Sent by the boss after a corset—I know it was a screen, but it might just as well have been the other—and—"

The word hung in the air.

Westgaard stood stock-still at the window, his eyes suddenly wide and bright. Before Carstairs could cry out even once, he was back in his chair.

"Tell me more of this business of screens," he demanded sharply.

Carstairs gasped, pointing:

"It hit the ceiling, Andy! You can see the hole. You were standing right in the light. Whoever shot knew who you were. Whoever—"

"The screen, Bill!"

Carstairs could not maintain even a semblance of calm.

"It came all the way from across the street," he shouted, although he did not go to the window. "From either the third or fourth floor. I'm going to call the police! Shot at you, Andy. No question of it. Couldn't have missed by more than an inch."

"Six. Good shot from that distance."

"Worst thing I ever heard of! Osaka isn't a frontier town. I'll—"

Westgaard placed a lean hand over the telephone.

"Don't," he said rapidly. "You want me to go after the—underwear. I may, now. All depends. Forget the shot, Bill, and give me a line on the screen."

The Osaka manager was unable to take his eyes from the window, the opposite building.

"If I'd been watching I could have seen who shot at you," he said at last. "It came through the window at an angle. It must have been fired from that vacant third floor. It was just leased to a British steamship crowd, and they haven't taken possession yet. The—the police ought to be informed, Andy. I wouldn't wonder if some one in the street heard the shot and reported it. Why should any one want to pot you, anyhow?"

Westgaard's hazy eyes brightened until they were as shining as the clear sky.

"Nobody wanted to—until today," he admitted. In a crisp voice, "No use talkin' about it. But this screen, what's it worth? Who knows we're after it? Who else's after it?"

Carstairs pulled his eyes from window to bullet-hole.

"This's a concrete building," he said shakily. "The bullet's stuck in the ceiling. I—this thing's upset me."

"Get on with the screen."

The other shook his head almost belligerently as he said:

"You're used to excitement, Andy; you're all head and no nerves. It's just come to me that perhaps the shot was meant for me."

"You're fair and I'm dark; you're fat and I'm thin. Besides—" smiling—"the sun reflects off that bald dome of yours like it would off brass. No, don't worry. Whoever did the shootin' knew who he was aimin' at. Now tell me about the screen." Westgaard's level voice sobered, calmed, the other.

"IT'S SUPPOSED to be a Korin. Made about 1811, a few years before the artist died. That's what they say at the museum. I had some one ask. It is made in six sections. You can't miss it." He paused and then said, "Give me a cigaret, Andy. I'm sweating all over."

"If you didn't follow orders so closely, Bill, you could take a drink out of a bottle in your desk. You need one! It's a screen in six parts, just like a hundred thousand others. Is that all you know?"

Carstairs smiled faintly.

"I—I'm going out and have one directly we finish," he told Westgaard. "But the screen—it's painted with pictures of the wind god and the thunder god. There are supposed to be two empty panels. The hair of the thunder god's done in gold. He's holding a round pole with nine thunderbolts attached to it. He's almost naked, except for some sort of kilts. The wind god's got a regular pig-snout. And then there's Korin's signature, of course. Anyhow, I've got a sketch of the thing; you'd better take it along."

Westgaard studied the drawing of the screen.

"How much's it worth?"

"Nobody knows. An inferior one brought fifty thousand yen."

Westgaard's eyes narrowed.

"Where is it?"

"Up above Denshaiko—the hot spring country. Been in the temple ever since the artist, Korin, died. Temple's broke, the Old Man wrote; that's why they're selling. Just buy it and bring it back. The priests are ready to sell. Nothing new about that. Every temple parts with its treasures when the priests are hungry, and this has been a hard season up Denshaiko way."

"Never heard of this screen before, Bill. I was in the Denshaiko temple once, too, but—"

"It was kept in the house of some rich priest, I understand, and has only recently been kept in the temple. Or I might be mistaken; it may still be in the priest's house. Not that it matters, so long as you get it. I've got the money for you in thousand-yen notes. Whoever's selling knows what it's worth."

"I suppose you kept the Old Man's letter in your desk?"

"It came marked 'confidential,' and I didn't suppose he wanted every one in the office to know about it."

"Just wanted to know." Westgaard crossed the office and examined the lock of the desk. "I could open it with a buttonhook," he said. "My boy—he's along with me, Bill, and he's a slick kid. Picked him up in my district—my boy could pick that lock with a toothpick. Oh, well, there's prob'ly no connection between the screen and the potshot. Just some enthusiast practisin'. By the way, is any one else after the screen?"

"Not that I know about. I think the Old Man was informed that it was to be sold; that information isn't general."

"Well," Westgaard said, "it seems as if some one knows. Somebody who doesn't like the *ketojin**. Who do we buy the thing for?"

"I don't know. I'm to send it to Tokyo when you bring it."

"You mean when I get it. You mean— What's the matter with you now?"

Carstairs had slipped low in his chair; he waved a hand to indicate that he wanted to talk, but when words issued they were almost in a whisper.

"The Old Man wrote that you were to go armed, Andy. Armed!" His chin trembled. "I'd forgotten all about that. You know how the boss is. Gives more advice than you can remember, just to fill out the page. But now that you've been shot at—"

Westgaard reached out a hand.

"Let me see the letter," he asked.

> Various trusted employees of this company are forced to carry large sums of currency, and it should be impressed upon them that it is necessary that they be in possession of a large caliber revolver of reputable make. A blanket permit has been secured for them by this office. You are to impress this upon all such employees in your territory.

For a moment he read silently; he grinned almost at once and then began to laugh loudly.

"And that's the Old Man," he said gleefully. "He copied that darned paragraph from his 'dictation-to-field-men notebook,' and you and I worried about it. He's prob'ly got a new stenographer, and she didn't have sense enough to omit it from a letter about me. Goin' after camisoles with a gun! Bill, don't ever tell the story on me."

"You're talking," Carstairs told him thoughtfully. "You fooled me once with a lot of words. I know what you're about when you're silent, but when you start to talk too much there's something up. This time it's that shot."

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*Hairy foreigners.

"Didn't know I gave myself away," Westgaard retorted. "Anyhow, you're wrong. I'm just glad to have a white man to talk to; none in my district except a few missionairies. Forget the shot. It isn't important. Now I remember a man up Shimonoseki way who—"

Carstairs smiled a little; then, since Westgaard did not continue, he said very quietly:

"Remember that you're big. You're easy to hit, Andy. A fellow who only misses by inches when he's shooting clear across a street won't miss when he's any closer." He swallowed and looked at the angular Westgaard nervously. "Be—be careful, Andy," he ended.

The north-province man found that somehow his hand and Carstairs' were joined in tight clasp. Curious emotion touched him, and he found it difficult to avoid saying that it had been many years since any one had thought of his welfare.

What he did say was this—

"I'll have a try for the screen, and keep my eyes open while I'm at it."

As he opened the door, and the noise of the outer office made it necessary to raise his voice, he added very loudly:

"I'm on my way. I'll take the night train from Umeda station."

Carstairs frowned and indicated that the door was open; his eyes, raising to Westgaard's, lighted with sudden understanding.

"Sooner you get started the better," he agreed vociferously. "The night train by all means."

The meeting of the two men's eyes was as warm as the handclasp had been.

## II

WESTGAARD had left his boy and bags far from either the foreign quarter or Shinsai-bashi-suji, Osaka's principal street. While he was in the descending lift from the A-I offices he decided swiftly that he would not return to his room, but go to the hotel. He made no further admission that the shooting had set him to thinking, that it might have some bearing on the business in hand.

The day had grown warm. In the streets off Shinsai-bashi-suji shopkeepers had drawn white cloth strips across the ways to filter the sun's rays. Intermingled with Japanese dressed occidental-fashion were many in kimonos, beggars and minstrels trying to walk in stately leisure between rickshaws and automobiles. One, in flowing black robes, bareheaded, bleated once on a conch-shell after a machine had brushed against him.

As Westgaard's rickshaw rattled over a bridge, he saw boys up to their hips in the river-bed, searching for eels. The river was shadowed by a six-story, foreign-style building.

"I haven't been inside the hotel for ten years," Westgaard said, when the Japanese clerk greeted him by name.

"Mis'Essg'd r'memb'r inn 'cross other side Yodogawa?"

"Westgaard said:

"Thought I remembered your face. And a good inn, too. That's where my bags are, and my boy. Send after them, will you? And I'd like a room topside. I'll eat there, too. And—" quietly—"I'm not in the hotel."

"You are not here," the immaculate clerk smiled. "Good. If not here, out of lobby be good also. Boy!"

From Westgaard's room high in the hotel the white man could see the city, cut into many islands round which swerved the black waters of the Yodogawa. Rafts, craft like uncovered sampans, steamboats of light draft, crowded the river; beyond it hung a fine mist, like heat haze.

He pulled a chair to the window, thinking that it would take considerable marksmanship to shoot at him now.

That he had avoided the inn began to trouble him.

"I'm gettin' old—shouldn't have let fussy old Bill scare me," he thought. "A screen, even worth fifty thousand yen, isn't worth murder. It might be if some *eta* were able to steal it from me, but the beggar couldn't sell it even if he had it. He'd land in jail the moment he tried. Besides, I haven't got the screen; I'm only after it. That shooting was accidental."

The more he considered it, the more accidental it seemed. Finally, relaxed, soothed, he decided that good might come of his half-fright.

"I'll order me a real dinner. I'll give the order to that clerk, and he'll see I get good food. Haven't eaten a steak I don't know when. I'll tell 'em to put it in a hot pan and cook it right. If the Old Man wants to send me on fool's errands, it's time I gave him something like an expense account. Wonder if I could get a dry Martini that'd be mixed right."

He went to the room telephone.

"Better write it down," he said. "A third, French vermouth; a third, Italian vermouth; a third, Gordon's; dash of bitters. Tell 'em to measure, not to guess! And I want it cold. Got it all written down? Well, here's another order. I'm hungry and I know you'll have it cooked right— Oh—oh, you think he was, eh? He's comin' up? What? Oh, anything to eat, anything you've got. Two portions of everything. Martini? Who said anything about a Martini?"

As he hung up the phone Westgaard muttered—

"I should have gone myself."

He went over to his chair by the window, sat down, pulled the chair round so as to face the door and waited. The clerk opened the door, but Westgaard's eyes went past him to the figure of his boy.

" 'Gainst rules ragpick'r come up," the clerk said. "Clo's teared. "*Maketa ni chigai wa nai!* There is no mistake about his having been beaten!"

Westgaard looked at the ripped kimono, bought for Choshimu only a week ago, for the great visit to Osaka.

The boy whimpered:

"*Danna-san*, I was not fighting with city boys as you warned me! *Danna-san*, of the new kimono there is nothing left, but—"

"Kimonos may be bought anywhere," Westgaard said in Japanese. He turned to the hotel employee. "Thank you. If any one should ask for me downstairs, say you do not know if I am here, that you just came to work, and arrange for some one to phone up to me, keeping whoever asks waiting."

The clerk nodded.

"There was a great excitement when your boy rushed in," he said. "Any one who knew that he was your boy knows you are here."

"For that reason he goes back with you," Westgaard ordered. "Drive him from the hotel. Have a porter do it. However, explain to him where there is a side or rear door and see to it that he is watched as he goes to it and then have him brought back to me. Can it be done?"

The clerk bowed.

"The lady tourists will be glad to see him driven out," he said. "From their words they must have believed that he was a desperate criminal, with his tatters and bruises, for all he is no bigger than a large flea."

"Flea am not!" Choshimu squeaked.

"He is your boy and he seems to have spirit," the clerk grinned. "We can not blame you for wanting to discover who beat him. It can be done."

Alone again, Westgaard wondered what had happened to Choshimu, and why. The boy could, and would, lie whenever possible; he might have picked a quarrel with the first Osaka boy he met. But he did obey orders, and one of these was that he was not to leave the room of the inn. Whoever beat him, did it in Westgaard's room. Why?

Had the lad been questioned and, refusing answer, become impertinent to some inn man-servant? The shot, the screen, the beating—coincidence. That was what it was. No mere painted screen could cause trouble, and yet—

He looked at his bags and saw that the strap of one was unfastened. Had a curious inn-servant been prying, and had Choshimu caught him at it? Or had thieves slipped in through the inn's windows to the room on the ground floor and, after having tied and gagged Choshimu, robbed him? They must have been disappointed in their haul.

Westgaard pulled the taut strap loose from its buckle. As he pressed the catch down to open the bag, he heard Choshimu call—

"*Har'nasai*—Can I come in?"

Westgaard bent away from the bag, although his fingers pressed the catch open, and he automatically pulled the top of the bag apart. It came slowly; it was difficult to open. As Choshimu pushed against the door Westgaard called:

"Put your hand on the brass round thing which sticks out from the wood and turn it. Then the door will open for you, Wooden-head."

As fingers turned the knob, and the door swung, Westgaard, his head away from the bag, pulled more forcibly on the two sides of the top.

The thunder of a discharged gun drove him back on his heels.

Smoke filled his eyes for a moment; his fist drove out at the advancing figure of Choshimu.

"*Danna-san!* It was—"

If it was not through the door, if some one had not been simulating Choshimu's voice, it was the window. Westgaard whirled toward it.

Before he could even look out, Choshimu shouted:

"The leather box for clothes, *danna-san!* I saw *san!* I saw! It did it once; it will do it again. I have never believed in devils, but I believe in them now."

Smoke, Westgaard saw, hovered about the mouth of the bag. He said, after he had looked within—

"That's what they beat you for."

It was almost impossible to believe that a gun could be so rigged up to permit its discharge. Blocks of wood held the butt to the bottom of the bag; from the inner pockets of the valise, wires were attached to the barrel. These held the weapon steady. Through the trigger-guard was another piece of wood attached by wires to two heavy springs. Opening the bag exerted pressure upon the springs; they, in turn, pulled down with uncanny force upon the trigger.

"Devils," Westgaard agreed. "You see how it was done, infant?"

"I see now," Choshimu told him, "and I see more than that. When—"

Man and boy faced the door.

When Westgaard explained to the hotel attaché that he had been handling a new revolver, and it had discharged suddenly, accidentally, and when he explained further that he had a permit for possession of a weapon, and when the employee had disappeared with indrawn breaths of politeness, then only did white man and brown boy relax and become natural.

"An old priest told me that a wise man knows when to be afraid," the urchin announced gravely.

In the same voice, as if speaking to an equal, Westgaard said—

"We will remember that."

Choshimu knelt down and looked under the bed. He went to the window and peered out.

"It makes my belly come to my neck," he stated, "but so long as that door is closed, we will have no more shootings and beatings." Filled with what had happened, he hurried with, "I know my kimono cost many sen, *danna-san*, and I thought I was a brave man—" he was twelve— "to keep thieves out of your bags. I thought the noise I would make fighting would call some one in the inn. But some pig-face had his hand over my mouth. I—I tried to fight, but I could do no more than wriggle.

"They came into the room through a window; I did not hear them. Oh, there were more than one. I know, even if they had a rag over my eyes and over my mouth. The first one who grabbed me took a kick in the leg. I wished I wore shoes like yours, *danna-san*. But they were too many for me. I think there were three. Or—five. Yes, there were five. When these eight men had been tied, they did something. I thought they were robbing you. Then six more men had been tied, they did something. I thought they were robbing you. Then six more men came into the room, and all began beating and kicking me at once. And then—" shamefacedly—"I went to sleep under their kicks and knew nothing until you sent for me."

Westgaard said:

"If you did not lie so much you would make a good soldier, baby, and if you did not fight so much you would make a good priest. We are going to eat as soon as food can be brought. I will buy a new kimono."

"And it will be torn by no robbers. I will have this devil-shooter, and—"

"Guns are not for children."

Westgaard took the automatic from the boy, pulled the clip from the metal stock and saw that three bullets remained.

"I'll obey instructions for once," he thought, and dropped the weapon into his coat pocket.

When food was brought, Choshimu admitted the waiter. Westgaard's hand was in his pocket until the servant had brought table and tray. The white man drank both cocktails and then watched Choshimu sample all of the dishes, a bite here, another there. The boy ate little from any of the plates.

"It has no taste," he said finally. "Besides, it is not seemly for me to eat before you, *danna-san*. Are you not hungry?"

Westgaard shook his head.

"Not hungry—but you eat, empty one. Is this not better than rice and fish all covered with *daikkon?*"

"It has no taste," Choshimu repeated. "I like food which can be smelled, anyhow. Besides the food of the white men does not ride well in my belly."

Westgaard had lighted a cigaret and was looking out at the lights springing up like rising fireflies along the river; he turned suddenly and caught Choshimu's face distorted.

"What's wrong?" he asked.

"There is a very small pain in my belly," the boy told him. "It is nothing. I did not know you saw me aching. It will be better."

The white man poured a glass brimful of *tansan*.

"Drink," he said.

When the glass of mineral water was emptied, Choshimu was ordered to drink a second and a third; then Westgaard thrust a long finger into the Japanese's scrawny throat. It was minutes before Choshimu gasped—

"Do you want to kill me, *danna-san?*"

"If you had eaten like a pig you would be dead already," Westgaard snapped. "If I had eaten with you, or alone, you would have a new master tonight."

"I ate nothing," the boy wailed. "I only tasted."

"Be glad of that!"

He stared at the scarcely touched dishes. Choshimu divined his thought.

"Let us have that bringer-of-food here, *danna-san;* we will slice an inch or so from his cheeks and learn something!"

Westgaard was certain, beyond any doubting, that the food was poisoned.

"We will talk to him," he agreed and went to the house telephone.

Before the waiter reached the room Westgaard placed a small amount from each dish on a clean plate.

Even before the servant began to eat, the white man knew that he was entirely innocent; no protest was uttered beyond a formal statement that it was against the rules and might cost him his job.

As the waiter removed the tray, a second Japanese knocked and was admitted. He bowed very slightly to Westgaard and then said:

"I am the manager. We have waited for some one to ask to see you, but we did not think of food. All I can say is that a new kitchen-coolie went to work for us this afternoon shortly after you came—and that now he is gone!"

Westgaard observed the hotel man soberly.

"You know what's up," he said at last.

The Japanese shrugged.

"We know that there is a something in the wind," he said. "A man—a white man—does not eat alone after being away from other white men. He comes to the restaurant where he hears his own language and sees white women. Besides, it is not every day that a shot is heard in a hotel. We said nothing to you about it, but I looked through that door—" indicating one to a connecting room—"is to make certain that you were not injured. There is also a man—armed—in the next room, with orders to see that you are protected."

He looked squarely at the white man before continuing.

"If you are to stay with us long, may we inform the police? We do not want you to leave. It is not that. We merely want protection for you while you are our guest."

Westgaard said:

"I'm leaving before night. Don't say anything to any one."

He had intended waiting until morning; now he wanted suddenly to give whoever was attempting his life an opportunity to act again, to act more openly. Shots in the dark and poison admitted no counter-action.

He said—

"You don't know who the kitchen-coolie was?"

"He came—he was hired. Now he is gone. We do not know."

Choshimu wriggled uneasily.

"He was one of the men, the twenty-six men, who this afternoon—"

Westgaard said—

"Be still, baby." To the hotel man he bowed. "I am grateful to you. We want to get to Umeda station for the night train north. But—"

"You will have my own car," the other said instantly, "and I myself will drive you to the station."

"That makes it very simple," Westgaard smiled. "Will you have tickets to Shibata bought? First class as far as possible."

"I will telephone some friend of mine to buy them, and he will meet us at the station. That is better than having the order come through the hotel. If you have room, will you take food with you? It will be carefully prepared."

Westgaard thanked him.

"You must be wondering what this's all about."

The manager spread out his hands.

"I have been in hotels too many years to be astonished at anything." He held out his hand. "Good luck, Mr. Westgaard, and be careful."

"I've been told that twice today."

" 'Man speaks once; repetition comes from the gods,' " the other quoted in Japanese.

When he was gone, Choshimu, a hand still pressing his stomach, said:

"He can talk like a white man. In our village every one believes that I can also, because I can say, 'Gair hair out here' and 'Wair hair my boy, Choshimu?' and 'Dam'fish got steenk'; but this man spoke as well as you. When I am a man I will have a watch-chain like his, and you will be very proud of your boy. You will say, 'He was not much when I bought him, but he is very fat now, and some day I will make a wrestler of him."

Westgaard smiled, but did not answer.

One by one he went over the events. He began to picture the sketch of the screen of the two gods—gods of the thunder and of the wind. Inaction always troubled him. If some one, or more than one, were waiting for another try at him, let them have it swiftly. The night train had merely been a blind; he believed now that it was wiser to take it as he had told the manager, that open action might really be the safer, but, at all events, it was action. He said suddenly—

"I'm going to leave you here, baby."

Choshimu's voice came instantly—

"Two men are better than one, *danna-san!*" Unconsciously, he mouthed what had been said before him. "I am your boy. Where you go, I go."

Westgaard did not agree. When Choshimu finally squatted at his feet, his torn kimono revealing the thin brown body beneath, Westgaard knew that, be his judgment what it might, he would take the urchin with him.

## III

JAPANESE were assembled at the station to say good-by to friends or relatives. Each carried a final gift, usually an imitation branch of cherry or plum-blossom. Taxis dashed among trams and rickshaws; electric signs blazed self-praise above the gray tile roofs.

A porter carried the two bags, one filled with clothes, the second, which had been the messenger of death, packed with food and mineral water. The tickets were in Westgaard's pocket, and the white man walked rapidly along the crowded platform, knowing that the automobile's arrival had been planned with the departure of the north-bound train.

The noise and bustle, the semi-occidental scene, made Westgaard feel for the second time that the attempted murder was meant against some one else—a white man, truly, but not Andrew Westgaard. He had, he knew, no enemies. He had been shot at from across a street, a makeshift infernal machine had been discharged in his room, his food had been poisoned, but all by some one who had never seen him closely.

Robbery was plainly not intended. Murder, and not thievery, was afield.

Despite his half-hearted reasoning, he was alert, watchful. Whoever wanted to kill some one was well equipped for the business. Being in a foreign-style hotel frequented by tourists had seemed perfectly safe. If it were not, neither was any other place. Westgaard felt that the whole business was impossible, inane, foolish; but he relaxed none.

Boys hawked sandwiches of gray bread, fruit, tobacco; a seller of hot macaroni howled his slippery ware; men said noisy farewells, their women standing a little back of them.

Nearer the waiting train several drunken Japanese helped one more drunk than themselves into the train, with much laughter and squealing. From time to time an observant little policeman wandered over to them to quiet the yelping.

Westgaard's car was the same as that into which the tipsy Oriental was finally pushed. He hoped that the rioters would get away from the steps. He watched them for a moment and was at last convinced that they were what they seemed—men who had celebrated to the best of their ability. He must be cautious, careful, but not old-womanish.

"When I am a man," Choshimu stated gravely, "I will not be a *sake*-bladder on legs. I will drink like you, *danna-san*, and none will know when I am filled."

"If you drink and I catch you at it—"

"You will beat me, I know. Some day—" smiling up at the white man—"you will really beat me, and perhaps it will do me good."

There was no reason to wait longer. Westgaard's bags had already been taken into the car. The drunken Japanese were still at their riotous business; their sober countrymen on the platform gave them a wide berth.

Entrance was blocked. Out of a corner of his eye Westgaard observed that the policeman was watching, probably wondering how to get the carousers away with the least confusion. A Japanese said—

"I am very ashamed of them!"

Westgaard remarked that they probably thought they were having a fine time. As he spoke he started to push his way gently through the men. What happened next was too fast for Westgaard to comprehend.

A hand was fastened around his arm, a second grouped about his waist, some one snarled in his ear.

"*Ketojin!*"

What Westgaard did was instinctive, the result of what had already transpired and his new caution. Instead of pushing the men away or calling to the near officer, his free hand went to his coat pocket.

He regretted the spat of his gun almost before his finger had relaxed from the trigger.

Something burned him where he held the gun. He did not know whether it pained before or after the shot; he supposed, curiously, in that instant, that the discharge had seared his own flesh. Before he had time to hope that he had hit no one in his moment of fearful madness, the bodies swayed away from him, moved by the unexpected shot perhaps, and then returned, in a mass, overwhelmingly. He heard:

"*Ketojin! Uchikorosu!* Kill him!"

With the grunted words he felt a new hot pain in his side. The gun was forgotten. He tore his other hand from whoever's fingers held it and smashed down at the smaller men. Some one had him about the legs. Choshimu was screaming; many people were yelling excitedly; the policeman's whistle, shrill, clear, high, pierced every other sound.

The Japanese were pressed closely to him, both in anger and to escape the heavy fists. The very pack of bodies protected the white man, although one of the Japanese, at the moment Westgaard crashed his fist into the upturned face, slashed upward at him. Westgaard jerked his own head away, and the descending knife brought a wild cry of pain from some other Japanese.

Teeth, he believed, were gnawing at his knee; he tried to kick out to remove the voracious mouth. Even as he struggled, tried to shake himself free, not knowing that the crowding protected him, the idiocy of the whole proceeding struck him forcibly.

A crowded station. A policeman only a few feet away, and what was the fellow doing other than blowing his whistle? A station in the heart of a great city—and murder! He shouted suddenly, as if it would explain everything:

"I'm Andrew Westgaard! What in—"

The answer chilled him.

"We know it," some one very close screamed.

That it was he himself they meant to kill lent a different meaning to the whole.

The Japanese were pawing, clutching, at him; they were too close to use their knives and, so long as he kept his feet, actually impotent. One of his attackers, Westgaard saw, kept away from the others, as if on guard; this one cried loudly something Westgaard did not hear clearly. The result of it was almost immediate; the Japanese tried to pull away, and a knife-arm, in striking distance, swung upward. Westgaard grasped the wrist, twisted; the knife fell to the platform.

The white man understood what they were trying; what he did not understand was why the policeman kept tooting his whistle, why the hundreds of Japanese at the station did not come to his aid. His long arms grasped at the Orientals; he tried to hold them tightly to him. The first to break away cut at his hand instantly.

Choshimu screamed again, with anguish in his voice. There was a second shot and the roar of an approaching machine, dulling every other sound with the wail of its siren.

Westgaard stood alone. The first thing he saw was a bruise across Choshimu's cheek, the next that the station policeman was attempting to follow what appeared only as a bulge in the throng of people, a bulge like the gorge of a snake, where the attackers were fleeing.

Choshimu edged up to him where he stood alone; none of the Japanese was nearer than ten feet, although all were now talking nervously, excitedly.

"I did my best, *danna-san*," he said. He dug a fist into one eye. "When I am a man I will be able to fight. One of these pig-faces hit me, but I will know him when I see him again, for I—"

Westgaard's side pained, throbbed. He agreed with the returning station policeman and a dozen of his summoned mates, who had arrived in the machine, that it would have been impossible to shoot at the thieves when they attacked him. He answered their questions calmly. No, he had never seen the assailants before. No, he did not know why they had assaulted him. No, he was not hurt. No, he did not know what they looked like. No, he did not care to come to headquarters and explain, since there was no explanation. Yes, he still intended taking the train, but who he was could be ascertained at the office of the Asiatic-Import.

The ranking policeman said:

"We have never had such a thing happen before. Here in the crowded station. And they have all vanished. But the officer here, how could he shoot? He would have hit you. And he says, and I believe him, that he thought he must be dreaming. An attack at Umeda station. It is impossible."

Westgaard said:

"It is of no importance. I am glad you came. Impossible, yes. Even while I was keeping them from stabbing me, it seemed impossible."

"And you can tell us nothing?"

"Nothing."

When Westgaard had climbed slowly up the narrow steps into the car, the officer announced—

"*Iwanu to moshitara*—I thought he would not tell, when he once said he would not."

"He is a missionary and disliked talk of fighting," another remarked.

"He is probably a missionary, because he speaks our language. No, we are wrong. If he were a missionary he would have rushed to his consul, and we would have a business on our hands. From the consulate he would have gone to the newspapers. It is bad enough to report that a white man was attacked, and we did not catch the men who did it; it is bad, but it could be much worse! That white man does not talk of fighting; he fights."

"He did it very strangely. He was never angry. I could see his eyes. They were blank. He seemed to be asking, 'What does this mean?' while he used his fists."

It was "What does it mean?" that Westgaard, in the train, was actually asking himself. He felt dazed, uncertain. Anger had not been in his fighting nor, until the final moments, fear. Had the assailants done other than crowd about him, he would have been killed. They were, he felt positive, amateur murderers; they did not know their trade.

Had whoever wanted his life planned the final attack, he had done it wisely, in the crowded station, where surprize kept interferers away—wisely, but he had picked the killers poorly. What chilled Westgaard was that they knew who he was and nevertheless wanted his life.

Choshimu had been very silent as he sat beside his master. He said now:

"I will know the one who hit me. He can see from one eye into the other. And when I see him again—"

"Don't go after every cross-eyed man you see. I'm going to the wash-room. Did you notice the man those devils put on the train?" As he asked, Westgaard began to observe the other passengers, all of whom were already looking at him.

Choshimu wriggled his nose.

"He is not here. He jumped off and hit me while I was kicking the ankles of a man trying to knife you. He is the one with the wrong eyes, and I will know him when I see him again, *danna-san*."

Westgaard's wounds were no more than deep scratches. In the wash-room the white man tied several tiny towels together and wound them as a bandage about his middle. Next to his skin was the belt with the thousand-yen notes; it, and the notes, were sticky with blood. The belt had been cut through twice, and Westgaard wondered if it had saved him from greater injury. This was hardly probable; the belt was made of soft, untanned skin. The bulge of the improvised bandage would be visible once he buttoned vest and coat; he removed the notes from it and slipped them into his hip-pocket; then he returned to Choshimu.

The train shot past village after village, dark, sleeping; the serrated mountain range running east and west swam in glittering moonlight. Long-legged gray herons flapped up sullenly as the engine rumbled over bridges.

There had been no sleeper. In the first-class carriage the Japanese, the strange happening at the station already forgotten, were sleeping on the long side-seats. A wriggling youngster was handed about like a sack of oats while several women tried to still his squalling.

Banana-skins, orange-peel, eggshells and cigaret-ends began to litter the floor. Westgaard closed his eyes to shut out sight and sound. Choshimu was already asleep beside him, his head on the white man's knee, his shallow breaths coming regularly, softly.

THE ROUGH sketch of the two gods of the Korin screen rose before Westgaard's eyes. The wind god was replaced entirely with the other more dread figure, Kaminari, god of the thunder. Giant naked body, with breasts like a woman's. Nine thunderbolts. Hair of streaming gold. Muscular arms, encircled with bracelets. At the corner of the carmine mouth a gleaming pointed tusk, curved inward. Painted rays about the navel. Ears like a pig—grasping toes—

A train-guard came through, and passengers were jerked awake to tender their tickets. Westgaard gave up his own, received his transfer-point coupon. When the guard had finished and had seen that every window was tightly closed and fastened, the trainman went to the second-class car ahead, noisily locking and bolting the heavy door.

Westgaard thought—

"I'm safe for awhile."

He leaned back in his seat. His long legs stretched into the aisle, and he drew them up under him, Japanese-fashion. He knew that the express would not stop during the night or, if it did, no passengers would be admitted to the through first-class carriage.

He did not close his eyes; shut, they would vision again the thunder god of the screen. For no reason he could justify, the god had assumed new, grotesquely horrible meaning. The pain in his side had disappeared, but he was positive that sleep would not come. The car, true, was locked and bolted, yet the safe thing to do was to remain awake, watchful. Choshimu had said that the cross-eyed Nipponese—even granting that the excited boy had seen such a man—had jumped from the train.

Well, it would be at least a day before any one could overtake him. Once he was in Denshaiko he would buy the screen immediately and wire Carstairs to meet him in Tokyo rather than Osaka. He would leave the same day he arrived, and then let the devils try and get him! It tickled him to think of their traveling north when he would be on his return journey. He was half convinced that the screen had something to do with the attacks. What else could it be? Into the screen the menacing figure of the god was woven.

Westgaard moved his head slowly, not to disturb the gently breathing boy. In the northern sky the Three Councilors had already opened their cold bright eyes, the vapors of night twisting round them like silken dreams.

The train hurried north; the wheels clicked against the spaces between the rails—*clickety-clack.* They began to sing a song:

"Clickety-clack!
You'll never come back!"

over and over and over.

Gradually the song of the rails dulled to a murmur; the stars seemed slowly to go out, and all things became viewless, blackness; the blue-distant mountains dissolved into the immense nothing.

Slowly, it seemed, the mountains reappeared, each chiseled pinnacle flinging to the sky the decoration of reflected moonlight. Rocks changed to flying serpents and featureless monsters, to many-headed, many handed gods, to painted foulnesses, pictured obscenities, divinities of abomination; at the gate of a yawning cavern there hung a star, whose five shining points drew together like the fingers of the clutching thunder god.

Westgaard stirred uneasily, and the dream vanished into the singing of the rails. *Clickety-clack, clickety-clack, clickety-clack!* The dream vanished, and the man slept heavily.

## IV

THE CENTRAL plains had been left behind in the night. When Westgaard awoke the train was puffing its way upward. Maples gave way to pine, pine to scrub oak. Volcanic mountains, rounded cones telling their origin and history, started trickles of water which, at the railway, became brawling, rushing streams, black in shadow. Through tunnels the train roared, while soft-coal cinders worked their way in at every crevice.

"It is like the journey to the lowest hell," Choshimu said to the white man. "When a priest from a little village first passes through one of these hill-holes, he must remember more prayers than he has time to say."

Westgaard was stiff, chilled; he drank gratefully the hot tea that Choshimu brewed. The boy gorged on the food from the hotel, but Westgaard was not hungry. In the cold light of day, he wanted to buy the screen, return with it and have the matter over with. Choshimu was not so easily satisfied.

"What does all this business of guns and poison mean?" the boy asked.

"No business for babies."

"Babies," the urchin reminded him, "can die just as well as men. If I am to be shot, poisoned and cut into small pieces for picking, I should like to know to what purpose."

Westgaard looked at the keen little face.

"You talk too much," he said, since he had no desire to speak of the screen. "I shall be forced to—"

"Beat me. Good! Tell me first and beat me after. I was unable to sleep all the night thinking of it."

"We go for a screen. You are not—"

"To say anything of it. I would not, *danna-san*. *Ho!* What we go for is something, but never a screen! Wood, paper and paint. Do men kill one another for such a thing? *Danna-san*, you have told me never to lie, and now you yourself—" He paused, examining the face of his master. "Tell me about this screen," he concluded slowly.

"Merely a screen like other screens. Look out of the window, child."

"Next you will give me suck on a wet cloth," Choshimu protested angrily. "Look out of the window. Eat an orange. *Hai!* I tell you men do not kill for screens."

Westgaard, thoughtful, said—

"I wonder if you're right." He added, aloud, "If not the screen, what then?"

"If you do not know, how should I?"

Automatically, deep in thought, the white man said—

"If you become impertinent I will be forced to—"

Choshimu snorted; grinned and then said—

"The train is going slower, *danna-san*."

Gradually the snorting engine slowed its pace. Over a swiftly flowing river it stopped entirely. Passengers began to whisper together and, when they had examined the distance from train to black water, began to whisper anew.

"They are afraid," Choshimu said in Westgaard's ear.

"And you?"

"I? I am not afraid. I shiver only—well, only because I am afraid some one will know how frightened I am. Can this little bridge hold the weight of these great cars and all the people?"

A door of the car opened, and a guard called out that the tunnel was blocked; much earth had slid before the entrance. It would be many hours, perhaps the next morning, before the way would be cleared.

"Those who desire," he concluded, "can go to a village near-by and spend the day there."

A passenger who knew the route said that it was unfortunate that the train was stopped at this point. They were, he said, almost over the mountain and once on the other side there were no more tunnels. A second passenger began questioning the speaker how far was it to the sea and from there to the end of the line? How long did it take to go?

Could one ride in anything or must one walk? The man who had traveled the line before did not know.

"I go in trains," he said. "I do not walk. If the train stops, I wait for it to start again."

Westgaard did not want to wait for it to start. He did not want to have the following train catch up with him.

"We'll go to the village," he said to Choshimu.

"And be eaten by fleas. Let us remain here."

"And have the bridge fall down with us?"

Choshimu rubbed his nose.

"You do not mean that," he stated. "You are like that other man; you are anxious to get somewhere."

Westgaard had not thought of the questioning passenger. When he had left the train and was shown the path to the village, he found that the other, carrying one small bag, was already clambering up the rough and narrow mountain trail. It took but a turn or two and the tall white man was up to the other. The Japanese turned and smiled.

"I am glad to have company," he said.

Suspicion flooded through the white man.

"We can go together," he agreed politely. "How did you know I spoke Japanese?"

A shrug.

"You spoke to your boy on the train," the other explained. Then rapidly, "It is a good thing this path is in the shadow. Otherwise—" a glance at his paunch—"I would lose fat without going to the springs."

Westgaard wondered whether the Japanese had heard what was said to Choshimu; it seemed impossible that he had spoken loudly enough to be overheard. He said pleasantly—

"You go far for the treatment of the heated water."

"A friend of mine told me of a wonderful place. You know the spring country in the north?"

Westgaard said—

"No."

"*Hai-ya!* Well, I go to a spring called Shaidenko. It is very good to remove surplus weight, and I have plenty of that. But I have very little time to spend away from my business. I need treatment, but I need it very fast. So I go to this place I tell you of and I wish to get there as rapidly as I can."

Westgaard did not see what difference one day would make nor why a plump, comfortable Japanese would want to go other than by train. He thought suddenly—

"If this fat fellow's going to try anything, I'll throw him into the river."

He found himself trying to get a good look at the Japanese; when he did look he was disappointed. He half expected to find that the man's eyes were crossed. Despite himself, he was relieved.

If the fellow-passenger was mixed up in the business of the screen, or whatever the thing was, Westgaard wanted to know it. He waited until it became necessary for the Japanese to stop and rest his arms. He heard him say that he had never seen a river flow so swiftly and then said suddenly—

"You don't mean Shaidenko; you mean Denshaiko."

There was a brief pause.

"Have it as you will," the Japanese told him slowly. "If you had known the country, had admitted you knew it, I would not have—lied."

"It is a bad thing to lie to my *danna-san*," Choshimu piped. "It angers him and—"

"I should not say he angers easily or he would give you a taste of the bamboo when you need it."

"He will some day, when the seas leap over the mountains and the stork mates with the tiger, perhaps."

The corpulent Oriental grinned at Choshimu, picked up his bags and said—

"We might as well walk."

Westgaard did not understand his boy. Choshimu was usually unfriendly and his attitude toward strangers was ordinarily one of silent sneering.

BEFORE the village roofs were in sight, the Japanese turned and stopped again.

"I talked too much, and so did you," he said frankly.

Westgaard did not say a word.

"I am going to Denshaiko, where no strangers have probably been for years. You know the name of that village in the hills, and probably no other white man does. You really said nothing save to contradict me, but that was more than you should. Well, we both—go there?" Westgaard moved no muscle. "We both talk too much and possibly know too much. Suppose we call it even and go together."

"What makes you think I am going there?" Westgaard felt this was wiser than any denial.

"Because you know the village's name." He looked toward the volcanic peaks. "I go for the hot water treatments, to take a few inches of fat from my bones, although a few days of carrying a bag up a mountain would do it as well and cheaper. Would you care to tell me what your business there is?"

A simple enough question. But why "your business?" Didn't it signify that the Japanese had business of his own, far removed from losing a layer of fat? Westgaard was ready to fence.

"My business?" His eyes were on the great cones. "Certainly. I do not know what the word is in Japanese—" nor, he might have added, in English—"but I am one of those who examine volcanoes." He hoped there was one near Denshaiko, but the presence of hot springs made it probable. "I write about them."

"You could not find a better place," the Japanese said. He seemed relieved, as relieved as Westgaard was to find his explanation accepted.

As the three passed under a *torii* outside the village Choshimu whispered in his master's ear that he was becoming a good liar, but that he, Choshimu, temple-foundling, could teach him to become a better.

Beside the village the stream hissed. Westgaard was surprized to see that a narrow boat was moored in a man-made pool. Mamatsu—the Japanese and Westgaard had exchanged names—observed the craft also and spoke of it when they were in the crude inn and settled on *zabuton**.

"Where would one go in a boat?" he asked the white man. "That river would be too much for one made of steel."

Both were in *yukata*—the thin crepe inn-kimonos given guests — and had washed the soot from faces and bodies. It was pleasantly cool on the soft matting. Raw fish, chicken fried in bean-oil and egg-soup were followed by *sake* and cigarets. Almost under them they could hear the babbling of the water of the stream. A venerable *nesan*, best the village afforded, did honor to the unexpected, unusual guests.

Mamatsu was very comfortable, but he admitted that his legs ached.

"It will be easier returning to the train; it is downhill," he said when Westgaard did not answer. To the *nesan* he said, "Can one go to the train by boat?"

The ancient "girl" bowed, smiled all over her face, pleased to be addressed by men of such great importance.

"The honorable river flows the other way, to the sea," she said.

"How far to the sea?"

"To the sea."

Mamatsu glanced at the white man.

"I should not care to go down that black water—alone."

Westgaard settled back comfortably.

"A day or so will not matter to you," he said, draining his tiny cup. "The waters will not cool, Mamatsu-san."

"No, no. Of course not. Still, I dislike waiting. I have very few days to be cured and—"

"You will risk your life for an extra day."

Mamatsu said meekly—

"I merely spoke of the boat."

They were silent while the girl filled the cups.

"How long does it take to get to

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*Cushions.

the sea?" Westgaard asked the *nesan*.

Her hands, her arms in their butterfly sleeves, fluttered. The *danna-san* had spoken to her. What a tale to tell!

"Fast—so fast," she breathed. "But, all the way to the sea? It is dangerous, O, *danna-san*."

Westgaard said to Mamatsu—

"It might be quicker than by train."

"Hmm! The volcanoes will not run away, Westgaard-san!"

"No—"

"What difference will a day make?"

"None, but waiting is not pleasant."

Choshimu made a grimace.

"You could lie better than both of them, grandmother," he told the *nesan*.

Neither of the men heard him.

Westgaard said sharply—

"Suppose we—"

"Try it? Good!"

They were careful to avert their eyes. Westgaard stood up.

"If—"

"We might as well—"

"Start." To the *nesan*, "Send for the man who owns the boat."

Choshimu rocked on his heels.

"Shot, poisoned, pickled and now given as an offering to the water gods," he whined. "What next?"

Mamatsu asked curiously, "What does he mean?"

It was on the tip of Westgaard's tongue to say, "You know damn well what he means!" He said, however, "He's afraid I'll take up to the crater. He's the worst coward in the Islands."

Since he glared at Choshimu, the boy did nothing save wrinkle his nose. The summoned boatman was obviously ill at ease, but he agreed to take the three in his craft.

"The water is high," he said. "Another rain and no one could get down the river. It—it is not a pleasure journey," he added, fearfully, since he wanted the payment terribly—payment enough to buy a new boat, perhaps. "The boat is very dry. I am very careful. I once—" great argument—"took a white man in it—oh, not far, not to the sea, merely a little way; but he did not even have wet feet save where he slid on the rocks! He—he paid well."

"Well we pay what is proper," Mamatsu snapped. "We waste time; let us go."

The boat was very narrow and was made of thin slabs of mountain cedar. Westgaard and Mamatsu knelt in the middle; Choshimu crouched in the bow; the boatman, with a long pole athwart the boat, half squatted in the stern.

The three men, the bags, the boy, weighed the homemade craft perilously deep in the water. The owner mumbled to himself but, three gold yen already in pocket and seven more promised at the end of the journey, said nothing. If a *narikin** and a *ketojin* and a boy of small importance wished to risk their lives, what business was it of his? He himself might be washed into the river and killed were it not for the fact that a priest of the temple had said that he would never die in the water, provided proper offerings were made to the temple. Katsu, the boatman, had made the offerings. As much as two bowls of millet but yesterday.

The river contained a *midzu-chi*—water god; Katsu had paid the priest; the priest had prayed to the god; if any one were killed it would be one of the others.

Katsu began to sing as he pushed the boat from the still black pool.

## V

THE RIVER flowed swiftly until the village was out of sight; then the boat moved less rapidly, and at last Katsu was forced to pole.

"Is this what you call fast?" Mamatsu asked. "It will take us a week to get anywhere."

Katsu sucked in his breath.

"It is a strange river," he said. "In a little while we will go down, down, so fast that there will be no wind in your lungs."

Westgaard had not been listening. He half turned to the boatman, asking—

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*Millionaire.

"Does the tunnel here become impassable often?"

"Yes. It is a very high mountain above the tunnel. On the other side the train goes down. In the rainy season the earth slides, but—" an eye to possible additional payment— "few, *danna-san*, are brave enough or strong enough to take the trail up to my village."

Mamatsu chuckled.

"I asked that question on the train," he said slyly. "It was accident, my friend."

"There have been too many accidents lately," the white man retorted.

The possibility of the blockaded tunnel had not occurred to him before as being premeditated. If it were, and Mamatsu, the agent, the fat Japanese, would never catch him napping.

Mamatsu asked the sky—

"Now who would want to hinder a man about to peer into volcanoes?"

Westgaard's answer came promptly—

"Or a man who wishes to remove surplus fat?"

"There is that angle also," Mamatsu admitted.

The boat made slow progress; in places the water was too deep for Katsu's long pole. Again and again the heavily-laden craft floated near the steep bank, and the boatman pushed with his pole against the rocks. Trees, thick, luxuriant, grew almost to the water; wild *cammelia* dropped their bright pink flowers to become boats sailing to the sea.

"Those are very rare flowers," Katsu offered. "They grow nowhere else in Japan."

Westgaard had seen them all over the north.

"I was thinking of many things," Mamatsu shouted, "and you talk of flowers. If you can not say something of greater importance, Katsu, be silent."

Katsu grunted—

"It is too bad if a man may not speak of the honor of his village."

"I have seen those flowers all over Nippon," Mamatsu said in the same loud voice. "When your mother told you that story she lied, fool."

"My mother did not tell it to me," the coolie muttered.

Westgaard heard Mamatsu whisper that he had not thought she did; aloud, the fat man said—

"Whoever told you lied."

"He was a white man, and white men do not lie."

To Westgaard Mamatsu whispered again:

"You see? Anger them, and you hear the truth. They like to talk anyhow." Loudly, "What white man? You have never seen one, save the *danna-san* here."

"He sat in this boat, I tell you! And right at that bend of the river he stepped ashore to examine the pink blossoms. I stopped the boat; he stepped ashore. He was a very learned man. He had a box with him and collected flowers. He said—"

Mamatsu waved him silent.

"Had he many other flowers in the box, Katsu?"

"I do not know; I did not see the inside of it. He took it ashore with him." The other's face puckered. "He took it ashore, but I do not remember seeing it after that."

White man and Japanese licked their lips simultaneously.

"How long ago was this?" Westgaard asked.

"Months. Four—five."

The white man relaxed.

"And so it had nothing to do with accidents or blocked tunnels," Mamatsu jibed.

"Why are you interested in the business of flowers?"

Mamatsu scratched his chin.

"Largely because you are," he said finally, as if that explained everything. "Stop where you let the other white man gather his flowers," he commanded.

At the bend of the river Katsu said:

"Here is where he got out. He slipped on that rock, and he gave me a yen not to remember about him. I had forgotten."

"Another lie like that, Katsu, and we pay only six yen at the end of the trip."

Choshimu, in the bow, giggled. While Katsu held the boat against the bank, Mamatsu and Westgaard scrambled out.

Before they were a dozen feet up the bank, Westgaard's hand was on his gun; if the boatman and Mamatsu had planned this together, the first shot would go to the fat Japanese, the second to the boatman; there were no more bullets in the gun. He let Mamatsu walk first and watched his every movement.

Mamatsu, however, seemed intent only on the earth. Once he stopped and pushed away hanging branches of a tree, once he stooped and examined the leafy ground; finally, with a throaty chuckle, he pointed to several large rocks.

"That box, Westgaard-san, is under those rocks. Do you see how mossy they are? But there are two of them at the top from which the moss has been scratched off—by fingers, perhaps."

"Or by some boy sitting on them."

"Suppose we lift the rock. Exertion is bad for my heart; together we will do the trick."

Westgaard leaned against a tree.

"I am not interested in rocks," he said.

"Have it as you will," Mamatsu said strangely. "After all, it is none of your affair."

The pudgy Japanese was unable to lift; the best he could do was to push the uppermost rock from the pile of its fellows. Above the rocks was a sheer, steep bank; these apparently had been tumbled from the formation above.

"You see?" Mamatsu whispered gleefully, holding up a small flat box. "In this we have—the study of flowers." He pried the lid off with a bit of sharp rock. "I should not like to be around when—these bloom," he said softly.

Westgaard was silent as he looked into the box. Like giant cigarets, sticks of dynamite lay side by side. They were plainly labeled in red, in English, and bore the address of the American manufacturer. The A-I, Westgaard believed, handled that very brand.

"None of the sticks are missing. There is no connection between a blockade today and the man who hid these months ago." Mamatsu raised a thick finger as he spoke. "I expected to find something here. Why? A fool like Katsu calling *cammelias* rare. You and I know they grow on every hill. Katsu did not think of that by himself. Very well—some one lied. Where there is one lie, look for a second. I did. And see what we found. It is really very simple. Now—" smiling—"it should be safe for you to remove your hand from your gun, my friend."

Westgaard did not move.

"Who are you?" he asked.

Mamatsu cocked an eye.

"I go to take the cure. I am a business man. You believe that as much as I believe you go to examine volcanoes."

The white man said crossly—

"Let's get back to the boat."

Mamatsu tucked the box under his coat.

"It will be well if I do not slip," he said. "This box goes into the river when Katsu is looking the other way." Half to himself, half to Westgaard, "This should be a lesson to me. There is nothing too small to investigate." He clambered down from the rock and then changed the last phrase. "To worry about," he made it, peered at the white man to see whether he had caught the subtle difference.

"If you are in a hurry, why did you stop here?"

Mamatsu smiled, made great business of climbing carefully down the bank, but did not answer. For the second time Westgaard let the Japanese precede him. As the Oriental stepped cautiously into the boat, he turned and winked at the white man.

"One lie leads to others," he repeated.

"I haven't forgotten," Westgaard returned.

"No." Then, in English, smiling broadly, "No, volcanist!"

The boat had begun to sway in the swifter current before Westgaard was able to figure what the English word meant.

It was perfectly obvious that the Japanese, Mamatsu, did not believe

Westgaard's volcano story; well, he, Westgaard, did not believe the other's yarn either. It was, as far as it went, even. Mamatsu was going to Denshaiko, a tiny village celebrated for nothing and hardly indicated on the maps. For what? What else save the Korin screen? Mamatsu not only spoke English; he knew a word that was unfamiliar to Westgaard himself. A volcanist, undoubtedly, was one versed in volcanoes. If Mamatsu knew such a word, there rose the possibility that he had been educated in the States, or in England, and was now a curio buyer or expert; he, also, wanted the screen of the two gods.

It would be impossible to outbid the A-I. The Old Man's orders had been to go the limit.

Had Mamatsu been in any way interfered with, attacked? Or did Mamatsu or the people behind him want the screen so badly that they were willing to go to any lengths to get it? Or—or what? Why did Mamatsu invite him to go with him down-river? Surely the rival buyer would want to get there first? Or, did the Japanese fear that in some way the train might get through before the frail boat, or that accident might delay Katsu and allow Westgaard, if he went by rail, to get the screen?

THE BOAT began to move still more rapidly, and Katsu called that they were to couch down and remain perfectly still.

"Have you ever been shot at?" Westgaard shouted.

He had been so filled with his own thoughts that he did not realize that the waters were beginning to swirl, to roar.

Westgaard thought that the other cried, "Sometimes!" but the increasing noise of the waters might have made the word really, "Seldom!" or almost anything else.

"The river is angrier than I guessed," Katsu screamed.

Westgaard sensed an open note of fear in the boatman's voice and, twisting his head around, saw that the Japanese was fighting to get the boat out of the main current and pole his way ashore. Even as he pushed, the current quickened, and the banks began to slide past at a more furious pace. There was no longer a chance to turn back.

"I complained we went too slowly," Mamatsu shouted to Westgaard. "I have never had such a ride as this!"

In the bow Choshimu frankly lay on his face. Snatches of his whimpering whipped back to the others. "Shot—poisoned—ridden to hell in a boat—"

Westgaard cried out to him cheerfully; but the words were wasted as the water roared more loudly.

The black river had changed color. It was now green like lightning; even the foam was green. The walls of the ravine closed in, and spray from rock wall and river rocks flew into the eyes of the men.

Katsu was poling valiantly, striving to keep the boat in the dark central current and away from the spots of lighter green. A sudden twist in the river allowed a beam of sunlight to dance down; it changed the foam, for time uncountable, to red—red like blood.

Before Katsu crouched down in the boat, Westgaard knew that they were being hurried helplessly along down the roaring river, a river high with rain, shooting through its rocky trough at terrific rate.

The low, heavily-weighted boat no longer pointed downstream; the bow was turned from side to side, and drenching, deafening spray leaped in. The roar of the water became ear-splitting.

A thud—a crash—the craft leaped ahead again, after a glancing blow.

Mamatsu cried—

"We hit!"

Katsu squealed back:

"Pray! Pray! The boat has torn away from me."

The black banks squeezed more closely together. They formed a gateway of granite, through which the boiling waters had to pass. The boat continued to gain terrific impetus with every leap, as it raced headlong for the gap in the natural wall.

Westgaard's eyes were wide, bright, unterrified. Strange exaltation swept over, through, him. He breathed with difficulty, since the spray dashed over him; but his head remained erect. The boat was still lower in the water. Westgaard could feel the coldness of it on his knees and ankles.

Out from cracks in the rocks ferns grew—great fronds which Westgaard could almost have touched by extending his hand. Diamonds of spray clung to them, turning them to the awful green of the river.

The white man strained to see Choshimu through the mist. The boy was huddled in a shapeless lump at the bottom of the boat, and Westgaard wished that the lad were nearer. He reached around Mamatsu, to touch the urchin reassuringly. A scream jerked him erect.

"The seat of the river god," Katsu yammered. "Throw out the *ketojin!* Then the gods will see us safe! Oh, gods of heaven and earth and fire and water and air! We will offer you a hairy foreigner if—"

Mamatsu, not opening his eyes, cursed him horribly.

Squarely across the way of the boat was a gigantic rock, jutting from the greenish, roiling water. Spray, wind, wave, had carved it into semblance of a giant seat. Against it water met rock with a terrific crash, was beaten, thrown back upon itself and, with a baffled howl, rose high into the air in yellow spume, to sweep ahead, on either side, into the lower river.

The boat was rushing on, riding low, pelting ahead in great leaps. Mamatsu's eyes were tightly closed, and he clung desperately to the boat; his mouth never opened, although his nose wriggled like a rabbit's, ceaselessly. As the nose of the craft lowered, he clutched convulsively at Westgaard. In the stern, Katsu was gibbering in prayer. Every god he could remember was being heavily involved.

The rushing water, the crashing of the turbulent water against the mimic seat of rock, grew closer and turned to thunder.

Thunder!

Westgaard, for the first time, wondered whether he would ever get to Denshaiko, ever see the thunder god painted on the Korin screen. He did not regret the decision to go by boat. Had he remained in the train, the following one would probably have meant that whoever had attempted his life before would do it again.

His eyes were open; he saw the boat swing with new sullenness toward the rock, rising, as it swung, in the backwash from the boulder. The river seemed roaring with goblin voices, hurled forth by the bone-colored rock dedicated to the river god, a rock polished by thousands of years of spray and water-tongues.

If the crude vessel were swept sidewise, water would engulf it instantly.

For a split-second the boat hung, undecided, in the backwash, prey of a dozen currents and forces. It rose more highly, nose pointed downstream, dipped, let in water at the bow, plunged suddenly, nauseatingly, steeply—down—down—to the right—away from the great rock.

Spray stung Westgaard like myriad wasps. He seemed in a hollow cave of seething, heated foam.

For the first time he actually thought of the closeness of death—not, in that moment, for himself, but for the terrified boy he had brought with him. No one could hope to save himself, either by clutching at the ferns of the rockwall or by reaching the boulder. Swimming was impossible, since the jagged teeth of rocks bit at the boat as it swept along. None could save himself, let alone another.

He had been near death before. A sneaking shot, curiously, was more terrible than death met with open eyes. He wondered if death meant death; he had never thought of it before; he hoped that if Choshimu must be killed it would be suddenly, at once, as near painlessly as possible.

Sickeningly, the boat swept by the

rock, so close that a shrill high sound was given out when it scraped. They careened, shipped green water, were smothered with wild foam.

Mamatsu cried in the white man's ear—

"If you—get to—Denshaiko—get—the—"

And, with his final word, the boat lurched and smashed down into the widening lower reach of the river, into water black, swiftly flowing, but smooth and placid.

Choshimu was sitting up, blubbering. Katsu remained on his knees, finishing his final prayer, half unaware that he was not to die yet.

Westgaard drew a deep breath, and then said:

"That was close. What was it I was to get for you in Denshaiko?"

The plump Japanese shivered.

"*Hai-ya!*" he said jerkily. "What—what a way to die! I—I shall need no mineral water—now. Tons of it are already in my lungs. And—and I believe I have lost—twenty pounds from—fear."

"It was not mineral water you wanted me to get."

The danger was over—the immediate danger. The roar of the water was receding; Westgaard had never forgotten his quest.

Mamatsu shrugged feebly, tried to appear unconcerned, although he trembled with revulsion.

"No," he said at last.

Since that was not sufficient, he said in a more natural tone:

"Whatever I want I can get myself." He coughed, spat and then continued largely, waving a pudgy hand, "This river is known as the river of the singing waters. What a song it sings!"

Katsu slowly guided the boat to shore, using a short implement half pole and half paddle which had been lying along the bottom of the boat. His original pole was floating down the river somewhere after them.

Choshimu called weakly:

"I was almost killed in the water. Am I to be frozen now, *danna-san?*"

Westgaard wanted to question Mamatsu further, but knew that the Japanese would say nothing more about Denshaiko.

## VI

THROUGH shadowing forests of somber pine and cedar the river hurried; above the trees, in the direction whence they had come, were the blue shapes of hills overtopped by peaks and cones of vapory gray.

A fringe of rye-field stepped down to the river for a tiny space, and then the straight pale columns of the cedars bore their massed black foliage to shadow the way again.

As the river swept down seaward, the cedars, the rye-fields, gave way to successions of diked terraces, green with rice. They swung rapidly past a little village, no more than a huddle of thatched huts protected by winged *torii* and gray-tiled temple. On a rock by the water Westgaard saw ideographs and symbols carved.

The air warmed, the distances—where they could glimpse them through gaps—were gauzed with dainty mists, filmy, diaphanous, like ghosts of clouds riding in the wind. Katsu became talkative again.

"No train goes as straight for the sea as this river," he said. "A train is made by men, but rivers are the work of gods. Is it likely that men could do as well as those who made them?"

Mamatsu tried to move his cramped, prickling legs.

"How do you get back?"

"It is very simple. Of course, it will take some labor; but I am very strong, and the river god is friendly to me. It is strange that we come down in hours and go back in days, however. But—" smirking—"the fox is in my wife, and I am in no great hurry to return. *Mah!* You should hear her talk to me. Me, a man! Why, once I told her—"

They were unable to cut off the flow of words. Katsu, the entire ten yen as good as in pocket, the prospect of a day in a large village before him, was growing steadily happier and more annoying.

"I will spend a few sen here and there," Katsu announced. "*Ho!* I know how to use money to the best advantage, and I know a place where a man can get electric brandy very cheaply. After that—"

"You will think you are a river god and, turning into water, will lie in the gutter," Choshimu shouted.

"If you were mine—" Katsu began.

"I would do *shinju*[*] the moment I was born!"

Westgaard silenced them both. It was Mamatsu who spoke first.

"I have always wanted to learn about volcanoes," he said thoughtfully. "Tell me about them, my friend."

"Gladly. Only first tell me a bit about the hot springs there. What type of water is it? Then I can tell you about the volcanic structure in that neighborhood."

"Hmm. Well, the waters contain—valuable salts. They are—hmm—good for fat men."

"Do they flow from the ground? Is there steam? Are mineral deposits on the surface?"

"Yes. Naturally. Of course." He paused and then said softly, "And volcanoes explode and go up into the air. That should satisfy us both."

Westgaard was unable to resist saying—

"I hope you get what you want in Denshaiko."

"Not what I want. What—" punching a finger into his flabby belly—"what I want to get rid of." Slowly, "The less I speak of errands the better, my friend. Will that satisfy you?"

Westgaard said—

"Why not?" and both became silent.

The farther the boat went the more certain Westgaard was that there existed no danger in Mamatsu. Choshimu, certain sign, liked the fat Japanese. Had Mamatsu wanted to kill him, and if the Nipponese were armed, it might have been done any one of a dozen times. Whoever wanted to kill him cared nothing for any other thing; death was all that had been intended. That, Mamatsu might have done.

There was no reason to tell Mamatsu anything; although, from Choshimu's earlier howls, the Japanese probably had done his own guessing. Least of all was there any reason to tell him of the Korin screen. Or, could it be the screen which took the other to Denshaiko?"

"Seems I've seen you in an antique store in Kyoto," Westgaard said sharply, "down on Shinmonzen?"

Mamatsu grinned broadly.

"You have missed your target," he said gaily. "If I am a curio dealer, my friend, you are an expert in volcanoes. However, this time you have told too much."

The villages were growing larger, the river broadening, the boat moving more slowly.

"We might make better time if we landed and were pulled to Yasudo," Westgaard decided.

"An excellent idea, O buyer of screens!"

Westgaard was not surprized.

He said:

"If we both want it, there's no reason to fight about it, is there? I knew you wanted something—and what else could it be save the Korin screen?"

"I knew you, also, wanted something besides the smell of volcanoes in your nostrils, but it took a long time before you trusted me enough to even indicate what you were after. Well, you did not trust me, and I—"pulling a hand from his pocket—"trusted you little more. My fingers ache from holding my gun, I can tell you. And when I walked first, after we'd stumbled on the dynamite up-river, I could feel a shot in my back every other step."

"Why?"

Mamatsu shrugged his usual gesture.

"Why? Ask me other things, my friend, but not that—yet. But, you were shot at, eh? And poisoning was attempted? Ask yourself this—is a mere screen worth death?"

"Worth a good many thousand yen, Mamatsu-san."

"Have it as you wish; one of us should

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[*] Suicide.

be able to purchase it, but it will run the bidding up."

"Would you shoot me to get the screen, if I buy it away from you?"

The Japanese shrugged a third time.

"It is hard to say now," he admitted. "If I do, I will give you warning. Will that satisfy you?"

"I suppose it must. Let's—let's get ashore. I'm sick of this damn' boat!"

KATSU was paid and, chest stuck out, went to have the first taste of purple brandy; *kurumas* were found, and the two men and the boy were pulled rapidly toward the next village. Promise of extra payment sent thick legs scampering, and Choshimu, lighter than the others, was forced to hold on to the vehicle to avoid being thrown out.

"Shot, poisoned, drowned, and now killed by a wagon with two wheels," he wailed.

"Is there no shutting him up?" Mamatsu demanded of Westgaard.

The white man said:

"I can try. He's only a kid." He called, "Another word from you about shooting, and I'll beat you."

Choshimu shouted defiance, but Mamatsu noticed that no matter what the other yelled, he made no other reference to unpleasant death.

Three times they paid off their pullers and took new *kurumas;* Westgaard's head began to ache from the side-sway of the vehicles. He stepped from his at Yasudo, after the last change, and waited for Mamatsu to be pulled up.

"It is something to pull me," the Japanese said, laughing. "My puller earns his money. Now, you are very long, but you are thin; me, I have some meat on me. *Ai! Nemui koto!* How sleepy I am. But it is not evening, and we want to get farther. It will mean another ride, if you can stand it. Denshaiko before night—and back by train at once. Are we agreed?"

Westgaard ran a hand through Choshimu's hair. The boy's eyes were bright, but exhaustion was in them.

"We need warm food," Westgaard decided. "And I want some cigarets. Let's eat first, and then go. There's no chance of the train getting in tonight. We've time."

"Only, keep away from the railway station, my friend. You are very long, and your eyes are very blue, and you have a monkey named Choshimu with you. You are easy to mark. Eat and smoke, only not at the station."

As they began to walk Westgaard asked:

"What's it all about? If you are after the screen you ought to know why any one'd want to kill me. And how about you? Any one take a shot at you?"

"If I had sense I would say, 'Westgaard-san, my friend, I believe I like you, but not sufficiently to be killed on your account.' I have not been shot at, but if I stay with you I may be."

Westgaard shortened his strides.

"Why?"

The usual shrug.

"You would be little happier for knowing. And I am not free to tell you. Why you want the screen I do not understand."

"It's very old—valuable."

"*Mah!* Valuable is hardly the word! It is vastly more than that."

Again—

"Why?"

"Here is an eating-place," and no more answer.

Pans of fried fish were brought the three. Rice and tea. When the meal was eaten, the frowsy waitress brought a small pot of red jam and a round bowl. Into the bowl she placed a spoonful of jam and then filled it with tea; this she offered to Westgaard.

"What have we now?" Mamatsu asked. "Do not I receive this new drink?"

"It is only used by *seiyojin*," the girl told her countryman. "They prefer it to tea in any other way."

"And what do you know of *seiyojin?*" The girl giggled.

"Other than that, I mean!" Mamatsu spoke very calmly.

She bowed bobbingly and said:

"One of them comes here; he has eyes almost as your honorable friend's—oh, very blue. When he laughs they become almost black. He taught me how to place sugared fruit in the bottom of the teacup."

"He speaks Japanese?"

"A little. A very little. He is always laughing at his mistakes."

"He comes alone to eat?"

Bowing—

"Always alone."

"And he lives—where?"

"I do not know." Her eyes clouded. "No, once he came with a Japanese. I did not like that man. His eyes could look from one to the other!"

"You see! I was right, *danna-san!* And I will know that man when I see him again."

"And when you do, Choshimu, I will give you a gold yen," Mamatsu said swiftly. He half turned. "I thought I heard some one—" he began doubtfully.

"The door moves with the wind," the girl assured him.

"I have eaten burdock and radish and black beans and fish omelet and lotus root," Mamatsu said to Westgaard, "*mochi* and *koyadofu* and *konuyaku* and seaweed and raw young sardines, but I have never heard of tea being spoiled by jam. Have you?"

"Some Europeans probably like it. Neither the English nor the Americans drink tea like that. Perhaps it's—"

"Of no importance. Let us start, Westgaard-san, if Choshimu's belly is properly filled."

"If mine were as large as yours," the boy cried, "it would take a whole food-store to fill me and it."

"That I do not doubt, young pig! How you hold so much is beyond me. Are you ready, my friend?" He asked the waitress, the only one the tiny eating-shop afforded, where *kurumas* might be found, and headed the way into the street. Westgaard saw how carefully Mamatsu stepped out, observed that the Japanese' hand was in his coat pocket.

"It will be nearly dark before we reach Denshaiko," Mamatsu said, lighting one of Westgaard's newly purchased, rank cigarets. "You should be the first white man they have ever seen; it will be an experience for those villagers."

Westgaard believed that Mamatsu expected him to doubt the last statement, but said nothing. What had started as a search for a screen—valuable, but not unusual—had by now throbbed itself into what seemed a question of his life, into which impossible events had crowded.

The first faint purples of sunset were already turning the westward sky to the hue of grape-dust.

THE DIRT street was empty; at an intersection of narrow ways, a beggar, dirty as the dust, crawled up to Mamatsu.

"Brass coin—only a brass coin," he whined. "One copper! A rin! I starve, O rich and honorable gentleman! My feet can not walk, nor my hands convey food to my mouth. Give me a copper in the name of Kishibojin, great and powerful mother of beggars, or I starve!"

Westgaard averted his eyes from the cripple, from the wild eyes and matted hair; at that instant Choshimu cried out, Mamatsu's gun barked.

The beggar had leaped erect and flashed a knife at the white man. Mamatsu's bullet had struck him as he was on his feet; the beggar swayed, the knife dropped to the dust, and he over it.

"Both you and I now have holes in our coats," Mamatsu said evenly. "I watched him; he begged from me but watched you, my friend. And so, when Choshimu's sharp eyes saw him start to his feet, I was ready. Pull off his rags, and let us see what is beneath them."

"I—I never saw a man die so fast," Westgaard whispered to the Japanese.

"A perfect shot," the other announced. "Rags, rags—and nothing else." He lifted a dead, clenched hand and let it fall with a little thud to the earth.

"He is dead, and you are alive," he said sorrowfully, although his eyes twinkled. "That is something; but I wish I had merely wounded him so he could have talked. I told you it would be dangerous for me to travel with you."

Westgaard rose to his knees, unable to take his eyes from the now nude body, from which a red trickle ran into the dust.

"He must have been crazy," was all he could think to say. He did not believe the beggar crazy: he was starting to fear what appeared a widespread plan to keep him from the Korin screen.

Villagers came swarming into the street.

"It is Harakoto," one said, in answer to Mamatsu's question. "He—" pointing to Westgaard—"stole his wife. We knew a *seiyojin* visited the woman, but he came at night, when Harakoto was at the station making money, and we never saw him."

"And who is this Harakoto—or who was he, before he started the journey to hell?"

"A beggar. His father taught him the trick of appearing crippled, and he made much money, many yen, and—"

"Where is this beggar's house?"

"On this street; but his wife has left him. Ask the *seiyojin* where she is. Not even Harakoto knows."

Westgaard whispered:

"You see. He was crazy!"

"Yes? Well, let us get away before these fools babble the story clear to the temple gates."

They were riding out of Yasudo before Mamatsu said:

"If I had wounded him, we might have had his story from himself. I have spoiled a good coat for no purpose."

"You are both fools," Choshimu shouted. The boy rode at Westgaard's feet now, since they had been able to get only two vehicles. "This dead man—had he never seen the man who took his wife? Assuredly he had. He knew what the other white man looked like, and if he had been the same in appearance as my *danna-san*, the waitress would have said something about it. No, that killer knew what he was doing."

Both men stared ahead. The same thought had been in both their minds.

"And if you had not shot him, I should have killed him," the boy added.

"By drowning him with spittle?"

"No, fat one; with this!"

Choshimu proudly produced a knife.

"Where'd you get, baby?" Westgaard asked.

"At the train, when—"

Westgaard's hand covered the boy's mouth; *kurumayas* were human horses and also had ears.

"It is a good story," Mamatsu jibed. "Only I saw you pick that knife up when the beggar dropped it."

"You lie! That was another knife!" Reaching into his kimono with his empty hand, Choshimu drew forth a second blade.

Mamatsu sighed hugely.

"We are at last safe," he proclaimed.

Even the angered boy laughed.

The pullers settled down to their work, as they dragged the vehicles upward. Peasants gazed wonderingly at the foreigners; boys, clothed only with a soft narrow strip about their loins, ran out for a nearer look at the white man; workers, with hats pointed like the straw roofs of wayside shrines, lifted their heads and stared dumbly.

The path became narrower; at last the *kurumas* could be dragged no farther. Mamatsu climbed down stiffly.

"It is obvious that, from this point on, we walk," he said.

In the terraced fields were thrust thin bamboo shafts—arrows of prayer; around them were fences of bamboo rods, from which hung fringes of straw and paper, as protection from heat and insects and as invocation to the god of growing things.

The fields ended abruptly, and the unused path began to climb through thickening timber. Somewhere a waterfall plunged. Mamatsu said in a tired voice:

"If it is much farther, I will sleep on the path."

Black night slipped down: again and again the men stumbled against the boles of trees. The forest was still, save when a night-bird hooted—*ho-to-to-gi-sooooo!*

"The people believe he is calling to

devils," Mamatsu said, and Choshimu shivered.

"Can you kill a devil with a knife?" he asked.

"There is no demon who could withstand two of them!"

With startling abruptness the trees ended. Before them, below the path, was a wide silver sheet, its surface reflecting like steel the bulk of the near mountains. Stars flecked the unrippled surface with ghostly, gauzy bronze; night transformed the rugged cliffs to blue and gray, amethystine—exquisite, spectral.

To their left, a *torii* straddled the path; beyond it were the flickering yellow lights of a little village.

"Denshaiko," Mamatsu said softly.

Westgaard was about to say that it was very beautiful when, close, a startled bird jeered again—*ho-to-to-gisooo!* The cliffs threw back the cry. *O-o-ooo!*

"Devils," Choshimu whispered, convinced, and slipped his hand into his master's.

## VII

THE ANCIENT priest who met them had an air of patient expectancy. His robes were old and rusty; his face was like wrinkled parchment; once the robes had been purple and violet silks, shot with dragon-designs in gold; once, Westgaard supposed, the old man's face had been fresh, youthful. The white man believed that Sosamo, priest of the temple, was the oldest man he had ever seen.

When Mamatsu greeted him, the priest bowed and hurried to pour water over the three pairs of hands—three times—from a ladle-shaped vessel of bamboo; he gave each a threadbare blue towel, with mysterious white characters upon it.

"Now you are all pure," he said, bowing again. "What brings you to Denshaiko?"

"Your sacred springs," Mamatsu said instantly. "I—well, I am very fat, and at times I ache. A friend told me of the heated waters here, and so I have come for relief. My friend here, from across the seas, is here to—"

"Buy your Korin screen," Westgaard said.

"*Haiya!*" cried Mamatsu. "That is no way to conduct business. We have tea. We talk. We are shown the screen. And then only is it time to descend to necessary business."

"So you desire the screen also?" Sosamo asked. "Your white brother asked me first. We will see what he has to offer. Then, perhaps, it will be your turn." He smiled at both. "We have no servants here. I must prepare the tea myself. Then we will talk of this and that. Push back that *shoji*. The screen is in the altar-room. I hate to sell it; but the temple must have money and servants and priests. And—" his ancient face became grim—"there is need of the gods here."

When the old man padded from the room, Mamatsu scratched his chin.

"I am to be forced to shoot you, after all," he said. No further admission that he wanted the screen was needed.

Westgaard said—

"What did he mean by 'There is need of the gods here'?"

"We may find that out, my friend. Now let us see this screen."

The next room was matless, covered with dust; everything within was moldering and worn. The shrine had no image. There hung some poor paper lanterns, whose once bright colors had vanished under layers of dust. Before the empty altar rested the frame of a metal mirror, the mirror itself gone. So small that Westgaard at first did not see it, there was, beside the mirror-frame, a tiny figure of some god—the Earth god, Mamatsu said—Kenro-jijin; gray, vaguely carved, holding in one hand a spear, in the other a minute cup.

Clear against the far wall of the chamber stood the screen. On the right leaped the wind god, his draperies flying, his feet buried in cloud; facing him was the god of the thunder, his hair flaming gold.

Mamatsu said gravely—

"It is very old and very sacred."

The white man stepped close to it and, bending, examined the signature in the corner, beneath the thunder god. It was identical with that on his sketch. Laughter shook Mamatsu.

"If it is an imitation," he chuckled, "it was done in the days when none thought of such things. Can not you see how old the screen is, Westgaard-san? Older than you or I or both of us. Made when gods were gods and not names; and know this —we are not willing to allow our gods to leave the country—even their pictures."

"I do as I am told," Westgaard said shortly. "I don't want the screen."

"*Ho!* And I said what I knew—not what I thought, my friend."

"A fat man should think of his belly—and I am hungry again," Choshimu put in.

The priest stood at the opened panel.

"If you are ready, *danna-san*—"

Sosamo knelt before a brazier he himself had kindled in the first room; he ground tea-leaves to powder in a metal bowl and then slowly dipped water over them, pouring the result into cracked, handleless cups. The thick green mixture was handed to each of the two men; Choshimu was allowed merely to watch.

"When I was younger, the tea ceremony was a ceremony," Sosamo mourned, "but I am old and forgetful, and this is the best I can do. Even the tea is of miserable quality. I have become accustomed to hot water. It is really as nourishing as tea, and I suppose I like it."

"This is delicious," Mamatsu protested.

The ancient cocked an eye at him, and Choshimu laughed wickedly; the priest's keen old eyes shifted to the boy.

"You," he said, "know too much about lies not to lie yourself, youngster," he said.

"It is his great fault," Westgaard agreed smilingly.

"He should become a rich man, then," Sosamo grunted. "Is that what you want, child?"

The darkened chamber, lighted by but one rapeseed-oil lamp, the presence of many objects of veneration, the ancient priest, all were working on the boy.

Instead of flippancy, he said in a reedy voice—

"I want to be like my *danna-san!*"

For a moment the old eyes peered into Westgaard's blue ones.

"You could do worse," the priest said slowly. "Now, the screen."

Westgaard decided swiftly that Sosamo would never bargain. The priest had offered no word of praise for the Korin, had made no mention of its art, its age. Good! He would name his top figure—every yen he had with him. If Mamatsu could or should go higher, it was not his fault. Sosamo would never listen to haggling, either with himself or between the two rivals.

"A hundred thousand yen," he said slowly.

Mamatsu's breath hissed through his teeth; he said no word. A second time the priest examined the grave white man.

"The screen is yours, my son," he said.

His eyes closed; what he said issued from his thin lips like a cold stream.

"I have slept beside the gods of the screen when I was sick. I have sat beside them when I hungered and had no food. I have prayed to them when my soul ached—and I have sold them." His eyes opened. "Better to help my people than to love an ancient screen. My people have forgotten it; but when it thunders and the ground shakes, they will remember the gods! It has been very peaceful here. Even the mountain above no longer puffs smoke, but is satisfied to have clouds circle its cone. Perhaps the god is no longer needed."

In the silence Westgaard heard the trickle of water and smelled sulphurous steam.

"Come and see our little village," Sosamo suggested.

Westgaard looked at the screen.

"It has been here many years," the priest smiled. "It has not been stolen yet, my son. Why should it be stolen now? Even artists have come to admire and copy it, but none would think of stealing it, even with only a worn-out priest to protect it."

About the rough roofs of the village-huts wreathed steam and sulphurous vapor; from a bank at the edge of the collection of shacks was piped the hot water itself, to fall in hot, steaming little cascades to a shallow pool which drained into the cold waters of the lake. Above the bamboo pipes were stark, scarred cliffs, stained yellow, red and white; into them the steam of a hissing, bubbling, hidden cauldron sent surging clouds of gray-white. On either side was the dense green of trees.

"If you go a little higher you may see the water itself come from the bowels of the earth," Sosamo told them.

The lake, Westgaard supposed, was the crater of some extinct volcano. Venturesome Choshimu stuck a finger under a jet of water and, howling, drew back his hand.

"It burns!"

Mamatsu asked:

"Did you think it steamed because it was cold? A bath in it might be good for you—wash away a few bad habits, such as calling me 'fat one'."

"You will have your flesh burned away and be as thin as a ghost!"

The pudgy Japanese examined Choshimu's red fingertip and then looked at the jets of torrid water. He grinned at Westgaard—

"I am not so very fat," he said.

Westgaard wished that he were on the return journey. The screen represented a hundred thousand yen of A-I money. Why was Mamatsu so jovial and contented? A sudden doubt assailed him.

"The screen has been copied, you said, father?"

"Many times; Korin was a great artist and much admired. The screen is well known and the object of veneration."

Could a copy have been made and put in place of the original? Why not? He, Westgaard, was no expert on art or screens. Easy to fool him. Did the old priest himself have a copy made and did Mamatsu know it?"

In the little interval Sosamo's body was drawn up to every possible inch. He merely said—

"I am a priest of the gods." But that was sufficient.

Westgaard, stubborn because he was nervous, asked—

"It might have been changed in your absence or while you slept?"

"And would I not know it the next time I looked, O man? That screen has been wife and son to me; I have watched it grow old and, in the last year, it has aged even as I have. Let me show you a copy, my son, a good copy. Then you yourself can see the difference."

He led the way to a hut in the village.

"An artist comes here for the cure," he went on. "To amuse himself, he has made another screen; he works on it ceaselessly, but can not make it the same as that which was mine."

There was, so far as Westgaard could see, no difference save in age: this second screen was as like the other as are two grains of rice, but it was brighter in color and less smoky-hued. The gold glittered, the red flamed; there was no gentling process of years.

"Would you sell it also?" the white man asked. "I would like it as a thing of memory."

"If it were mine I would give it to you," Sosamo answered. "But it is not mine and I can not. Besides, the owner is very proud of it. Come, we have had enough of screens! If it were earlier, I would have food bought for you, but as it is I can offer only sleep and a feast in the morning. It seems strange to have money again."

When they had returned to the bare temple Westgaard said carefully:

"I have orders to return with the screen at once. I must go this night. I would like to stay, but I can not."

Reaching into his trousers pocket, he handed, without a count, a roll of bills to the priest.

"I knew you offered all you had," Sosamo said quietly. "That is probably the reason I said 'yes'."

Mamatsu blinked. He told Westgaard—

"I thought the money was in a belt around your waist."

The white man unbuttoned coat, vest, and shirt; pulled loose the improvised bandage made of towelling, wincing as the dried blood tore away from the wounds.

"The beggar was not the only one." he said. "You return with me, Mamatsu-san?"

For a second time the abrupt frontal attack disconcerted Mamatsu; the purchase of the screen, so simply, so easily had upset him originally. Westgaard had sensed this and knew that Mamatsu was fishing about in his mind for the proper move to make. That the Japanese had come from Tokyo or Yokohama for the screen was certain. What would he do about it now?

Mamatsu blinked again, shrugged, spat out of the door, scratched his chin. At last he stooped to the priest's ear and whispered rapidly; the priest nodded answer.

"You need a protector, but I am too tired and too fat to go with you. Sosamo has just told me that I am welcome to stay, even if you depart." Did the priest's eyes move? Westgaard believed that they did. "And so I remain in comfort, O restless one. Go ahead—and good luck. But, offer no money to beggars. And when you are again in Yasudo, that is, if I—no, when you are in Yasudo, board the train and stay in it. You hear me?"

Westgaard knew beyond doubt that the Japanese was upset, undecided.

"And when you are again wherever you are going with the screen tell your employer—whoever bought the screen—that he should inform—hmm! Well, it depends upon who your employer is—*hai!*—Tell him—nothing! I am upset; I am indeed."

Not until the Japanese had finished his disjointed sentences did Westgaard realize that he had been speaking in English.

Westgaard was not elate. He had a hundred questions to ask Mamatsu. Who was he? Why did he want the screen? Who was the beggar? What was the shooting and knifing about? Why hadn't Mamatsu made a greater effort to purchase the screen or to offer an objection to his taking it now? Why? Why? What? What?

The priest— What was meant by his saying that there was need of the gods in Denshaiko? Mamatsu— What had he whispered to the priest? Wasn't it the priest's answer that made him acquiescent? What had that answer been? And what the question?

It was too much for Westgaard.

He had, indeed, accomplished his purpose; had brought the business to the place where the screen was his—the A-I's. Nothing remained save to get it safely home. His plan was ready, he would return, in the dark, to the outskirts of Yasudo, leave Choshimu and the bags hidden by the roadside, then hire a *kuruma* and be pulled to the next railway station. It meant a long return walk, but all downhill; Choshimu was young, and a long sleep would set the youngster right again. He himself was not tired, just as he was not elated. He had done his job. The thing to do was to see it entirely over.

**HE BOWED,** picked the screen up and tucked it under one arm; he took the bag in the other hand. He saw that as soon as they were out of earshot Choshimu intended to say that he was hungry, tired, and would not go another step. He said pleasantly to Mamatsu—

"I hope you enjoy the waters here."

There was no sting in his words; he wanted to tell Mamatsu that he realized he had been lucky, and that he was still watchful.

Mamatsu took it the same way.

"I hope, on my part, that a volcano grows across your path and you are forced to climb over it." Vastly more than Westgaard, the corpulent Nipponese seemed satisfied with himself. Whatever had caused this could be only one thing—the whispered words between Mamatsu and Sosamo. Westgaard's distrust returned anew. Mamatsu was pleasant, a good companion; more, he had saved Westgaard's life but, just the same, he might be ready to take it now.

Westgaard bowed slightly a second time and then stepped from the temple, Choshimu directly behind him.

The screen was bulky, of an awkward size to carry. Care was necessary, or some low branch or shrub might tear through the delicate material and ruin the screen entirely. He started cautiously along the lake-path. Choshimu whined continually.

"Shot, poisoned, stabbed, drowned, and now killed from lack of food and sleep and by too much walking. Am I a cloud that it takes no effort to move along? Am I a snake that I have no legs to ache? Is my belly no larger than a flea's? What do you think I am?" In the same whispering voice, "I tried to hear what the fat one said to the priest, but caught only one word—'path'."

Westgaard nodded. After a few more paces he set down screen and bag.

"I have my hands filled, baby," he said. "Here is the gun. Keep it in your hand. There are only two shots in it; if you hear anything, wait until you are certain, telling me, that I may take the gun from you and use it. But if you hear nothing—and a knife in the hand of a waiting man makes no sound—shoot at any one you see and, unless there are more than one, keep going down the path. And go back to Osaka with the screen—or—"

It was a feeble plan at best; Choshimu made it impossible by saying:

"I stay where you stay. I am not afraid to shoot a gun, but I would not hit anything. A knife is a man's weapon, anyhow. I think the old one in the temple frightened you as much as you could be frightened by any one. Are—are we old women?"

Westgaard said, as to an equal:

"I only want to get the screen to my people, infant. It isn't that I'm—"

"Am I a fool?" Choshimu began his litany. "Shot—poisoned—drowned—and now considered a fool, since my master believes I think he is afraid. What next?"

It had been dark when they left the temple, but a great pale moon now flooded the placid lake, turning the reflection of the volcanic peaks to ebony.

Westgaard followed the path carefully; at the entrance to the bordering forest he knew that even greater caution from attack, from damage to the screen must be exercised. In the woods the weird cry of the night bird called; the echo sprang back and forth across the level lake.

The white man lowered his head and set his feet on the invisible path; then, all at once, a great pain hammered through him. The lake's light flamed to molten brass, to the red of blood; the crags and cones danced diabolically, hand in hand. He heard, as from a great distance, Choshimu's voice in fear; the peaks whirled and plunged into the inferno-hued waters and turned them—all at once—into inky blackness.

Before the second and unnecessary blow was smashed down upon his head, Westgaard was unconscious.

## VIII

SLOW, pulse-like movement, gentle, yet, sending resultant throbs through his head. His eyes opened. Above him stars thrust down distressing, painful points of light, stars which wriggled, twitched, were never still. He was, he knew, flat on his back, bound very tightly and carried along effortlessly, noiselessly, undoubtedly carried in a boat, and over the lake. A second body was beside his own, but he did not try to touch it, for fear that he would find it cold.

The effort of a turned head brought exquisite agony. Over the low side of the boat he was able to see the lights of a village—Denshaiko—and, over it, the towering peaks and cones of the mountain. He tried to lick his lips and knew, then, that he was gagged.

Clear to the far side of the lake the boat was propelled and, then, swung round. It began to follow the shore. Naked rock loomed high. The boat slipped along the cliffs until, at an angle in the rock, a blacker mouth opened, and the rowers guided the boat into a broad cavern.

No word was spoken. The place was black. A shower of hot water dripped from above, touching the white man's upturned face, like feverish fingers oozing blood.

The boat was no longer paddled or rowed, but advanced by being pulled by a man, or men, hauling on a rope fastened to the rocky side of the cavern. The boat scraped against the rocks with little grating noises.

For several minutes it proceeded in this manner; then the man in the bow took a stone from the bottom of the boat and rapped heavily—*thud-thud-thud-thud*—as if in signal; the hollow echoing was reiterated with thundering repercussions throughout the cave. Roaring, tumbling sound crashed from rock to rock.

Silence, blackness, again, for a full minute.

Then a great burst of light, coming from the mouth of a tremendous and lofty archway of rock, opening into the narrower channel at right angles. The vault was fully fifty feet above the water, and the walls as far apart. Far up on the left, near the roof, was a projecting white rock on which flamed a battery of huge candles, unwinking in the still air of the cave. Above the rock, white water dripped, water so hot that it steamed as it fell.

The seeping trickle made the cavern seem full of voices, as if a host of goblins were holding converse. Against a shelving rock the boat was pushed and tied. The man in the stern of the boat stepped forward, bent over Westgaard and said—

"He is aware of the world again."

The cave howled back—

"World again!"

Westgaard's legs were unbound; he was cut loose from the boat and shoved to his feet; as he stepped unsteadily from the craft, he saw that Choshimu was on the boat's bottom.

He reached down swiftly; he knew that Choshimu was unconscious, or at least simulating oblivion, but not dead.

"Come," snarled the man who had been in the bow of the boat. He indicated a path, cut in the rock.

Westgaard said—

"This boy—"

"*Kono baka yaro me nani nukashi agaru?* What is the damn fool gabbling about?" asked the second man.

His mate said:

"If he wants to carry the boy, let him. He is a large *ketojin*, anyhow, and we might have to come back for the brat."

First one Japanese, then Westgaard carrying limp Choshimu, and then the other Oriental—in that order they started up the rock path. The light was no longer dazzling, now that Westgaard's eyes were accustomed to it after the darkness. The way was steep, difficult. Below was the black depths of the grotto; at times the path, barely wide enough for feet, jutted over it like a shelf.

Westgaard's head ached increasingly from exertion. For moments he thought that a new trickle of heated water was flowing down his cheek; then he realized that the flow was steady, and down one cheek only. Movement had started the blow on his head to bleeding again.

The body of Choshimu grew a heavier burden. The boy hardly breathed. The white man thought—

"They might have hit him with less force."

They— Who? The boatmen, naturally. But was that all? Never. What—who—was back of the boatmen? He was being taken somewhere. Why? For what purpose?

What, save coming and getting the Korin screen, had he ever done? And where was the screen? Had Mamatsu engineered the waylaying?

This last he doubted. Mamatsu might have slugged and robbed him of the screen, but would never have done more than leave him on the path to recover and—the white man believed—would probably have seen to it that some one from Denshaiko discovered him and carried him back to the village.

If not Mamatsu—who? He would, he

supposed, find out soon enough, possibly too soon.

Beside the candles the boatmen paused, knelt, prayed to nothing more than water or rock or candles and, picking one of the tapers from its melted grease, blew out the others.

Ahead, now, Westgaard saw a hole cut in solid rock. Into it the first of the Japanese scrambled. There was barely room for Westgaard and the burden in his arms to follow.

Each step was bringing the white man to more perfect realization of the scene which might follow; on this last he did not care to think. He believed that he might with success hammer down the Japanese before him; but the man behind would make short work of any attack.

Westgaard shifted Choshimu's body slowly. The gun was gone.

Choshimu seemed to stir, to breathe irregularly, and Westgaard whispered—

"Baby, where are you hurt?"

Silence. Then:

"My head buzzes. There are bees in it."

"Lie still."

Going up a steep incline, the candle began to flare as air from a larger chamber in the rock blew against it.

Choshimu said—

"*Gair hair* out here!"

Well enough to get out, but how?

Since the captors could not understand Choshimu's demand, in English, that Westgaard and himself leave, even if profanely, the white man answered in Japanese:

"It is impossible. One ahead; one behind."

"Set me—down. I can walk if you—hold to my hand, *danna-san*."

At the exact moment that Westgaard's eyes caught light ahead, Choshimu whispered, on tiptoe to gain the white man's ear—

"They took one knife, but I have the other."

Then a sharp angle brought them into another rock-chamber, almost as large as that of the pool.

If Choshimu had only given him the knife before! If he had only thought to try and find one— If, if, if!

Light blinded him now. Behind him, behind the Japanese following him, a rock door was slid into place, fitting into the stone corridor perfectly.

WESTGAARD, the pupils of his eyes contracted, stared ahead of him. What seemed a flaming candle turned almost at once into the gold of the screen—the hair of the thunder god.

It was the screen; it must have been carried there before him.

There were strange paintings on the wall—weird foxes gilded, gods of many heads and many hands. A chisel had cut crude freizes of animals and men in the rock; silk of many colors covered portions of the bare stone. But, dominating the strange rock-room, was the screen of the two gods.

Westgaard thought:

"They've got the screen. Why do they want me?"

The room sent a chill through him. The unreality of it. Tokyo only a day away! Automobiles, messenger-boys, telephones—he had thought of that before leaving Osaka. Was this thought, in some curious way, premonition?

Both Japanese had disappeared behind the screen.

Choshimu's fingers tightened about his.

"I think we are going to be killed, *danna-san*," he whispered.

Westgaard supposed that, in some remote corner of his brain, he must have been thinking the same thing. He admitted nothing of this fear to the boy.

"We have been in tighter places than this," he whispered back.

A voice said mockingly, in English—

"I doubt it."

Westgaard's heart bounded.

He kept his head steady; he did not glance around the room. He said evenly, while his heart did double-knock against the wall of his chest:

"Don't doubt what you do not know.

Come out where I can see you. What's the meaning of this foolishness?"

"The sight of me would destroy your eyesight," the mocking voice continued, "or I would satisfy your curiosity."

"You're behind the screen. If I knock it over—"

"Several nervous fingers will be glad to shoot you before your hand comes up. No, we talk as we are."

Westgaard suddenly wanted time.

"May I sit down. Your accomplices weren't any too gentle with us."

"Gladly. The floor is just below your feet. It is rocky, but you might as well get used to rock."

Fear welled in the white man. Even Choshimu, not understanding the words of the hidden speaker, trembled. Westgaard said quietly:

"Why should you want to keep me here?" He did not squat on the floor; the idea of being off his feet was distasteful. "I'm not good at guessing riddles."

"If I let you go, you will forget about the Korin?"

Westgaard almost said, "Yes!" but, in the same even tone, said, "No."

The answer was mocking:

"You are a good boy; you will go to heaven when you die. It made no difference what you answered."

"No, I suppose not. But what happens when my people miss me when I do not return?"

Laughter.

"Do you think they will ever find you here?"

Westgaard shot into the dark:

"Perhaps not. But will you care to have people searching around? It seems to me you must like privacy."

"I had thought of that," the other informed him immediately. "It was the lesser of two evils. If you had any sense, you would have seen that you were not wanted here, and stayed away. But since you could not be persuaded—"

"By shots or poison?"

"Not be persuaded—and so here you remain. You wanted to get to Denshaiko: you shall stay here."

Gradually Westgaard was becoming more positive that here was no Japanese speaking English; it was, beyond reasonable doubt, a white man. No blurred "l," no hissing "s." Nothing was to be lost by frankness.

"My office sent me after the Korin. Perhaps there's some sense to you—a thing you say I haven't got; if so, I don't see it."

The other laughed.

"You are one of these—what is the word?—go-getters! I dislike to hurt your sense of pride, but you never had the Korin, my dear man."

He spoke English; but he was neither English nor American.

"I had it in my arms."

"Bah! You are completely a fool. The Korin has been here for months. And consequently you show yourself a liar; any one who pays a good many yen—" he didn't know the amount—"for a screen ought to be an expert. And you are not. Examine this screen—oh, from a distance; don't come more closely. Examine it. Is it stained with smoke? Does it look ancient? No! It needed no treatment. The other was so carefully copied that it fooled that old priest, who, however, is probably half-blind. You never had the Korin, my dear fellow; although, if I had known how matters turned out, I might have let you have it. Yes, I might have left it in the temple, and then when it was sold—as the priest has talked of selling for some months—it would not have m-m-m-m—"

The sound hummed out.

"Not have mattered if it were discovered that the other is a copy," Westgaard concluded for him. "If it is such an excellent copy, the one I bought, it might not have been discovered."

The other did not reply. Greater and greater became Westgaard's desire to see the hidden man.

"We've talked plenty," Westgaard said sharply. "You know who I am—an employee of an American company. Thi youngster's my boy. I was sent here fc the screen."

"Sent by who?"

"My company. I—"

"You lie! Oh, they sent you, but who told them to get it?"

"Don't know."

In a higher voice:

"You lie again! If you want your freedom, tell the truth. Who sent you? I can find out, if I wish."

"Find out. I don't know."

"You are mistaken. I can find out from *you*."

The meaning of it sunk in.

"It will be a worthless task. Anything you force from me will be a lie, since I do not know."

"We will teach you how to talk!"

Westgaard said softly—

"No, you will merely teach me how to lie, and you are probably a master-hand at it."

He did not want to anger the other, but what else was there for him to do or say? Choshimu had edged closer to him; he felt the boy's body against his and then he felt a knife slipped slowly, carefully, into his hand. The two stood together in this position, the knife concealed. Better, first, to try once more at conciliation, explanation.

"Very well, I bought a bogus screen. You have the real one, and you will not sell. I can truthfully say that the best I could get was a fraud. If you want to bargain for my silence, and do not want hundreds of Japanese officials swarming about Denshaiko when I'm missed, the only thing you have to offer is my freedom."

"Officials! I knew you lied! Do the Japanese care what happens to a foreigner, unless he has some mission like yours? You are a liar and a fool! I am not quite ready to leave Denshaiko, but even when I go you are to stay here. In the meantime I will have a question or two to ask, and you shall become acquainted with a splendid cell in the rock which will be your home. You will know then how political prisoners of ours are treated in that so great America of yours."

He clapped his hands.

"Take him away," he screamed in Japanese.

Westgaard cried—

"So that's what you are!" He sprang directly for the screen, his knife out.

There had seemed to be a shadow behind the image of the thunder god; straight through the god's belly Westgaard slashed. A shot roared in the rocky chamber; a heavy, falling Japanese leaped from some hidden compartment behind a silken hanging to the white man's back. Westgaard threw him off and cursed; after this one ejaculation he said nothing more, but fought wildly.

Arms were about him; his muscles knotted as he tore away and, the knife in hand, hurled the screen aside. Behind it was bare wall. He had no time to see where the hidden man had vanished; no time to wonder whether a rock-door was in the wall; he faced about like lightning.

The grit of the blade against bone, as he struck, almost turned him sick; the Japanese dropped to the floor, a thin stream of yellowish saliva trickling down his chin.

Since the other two immediate attackers had drawn back, Westgaard had a moment of respite.

Why hadn't he waited? What was to be gained by this senseless onslaught? Only one end was possible. Surely, later, there might have been a chance to escape. Had the thought of imprisonment in this rock-shell driven him, for the instant, mad, just as the actual incarceration would do even more certainly? And Choshimu—what of the boy? He cried loudly:

"Stay away, Choshimu! Have nothing to do with me! I forced you to come."

A taunting laugh battered from wall to wall. The unknown man was watching; yet in the laugh was something else. Anger? Fear? A terrible finality? All three?

Westgaard had no time to attempt dissection of the uncanny laughter. He had been holding the knife menacingly before him; he moved his hand, and a second shot—from high in the wall—shattered the blade.

The two Japanese advanced, together, with little sidewise steps like fighting crows. Westgaard watched them warily. Each was armed with a knife, but neither seemed anxious to close in.

The mocking voice called:

"Two to one—two with a knife and one without. I have heard you are a brave man, Westgaard; show them how to fight! This is better than a show."

The white man did not await the final dash; he stepped forward swiftly and smashed one of the Japanese across the mouth before either of them could stab; he stepped back as swiftly, against the rock-wall of the room.

Blood flowed from the Oriental's lips.

Candle-light. Tapers hissing softly. Crimson silks embroidered with writhing dragons. Obscene gods. The overturned, ancient screen, fallen upon its face, gashed in a right-angled tear. The smell of burned powder. Unreal—impossible!

High in the chamber a bell sounded; the sweet singing tones changed to metallic thunder in the room of rock.

Behind Westgaard was a movement which sent shivers up his spine. Relentlessly, he was being pushed forward, but by nothing human. An opening door, in the wall behind him, was being shoved outward, moving him, inch by inch, toward the waiting pair. He dared neither to turn nor to take his eyes from the assailants before him.

He leaped forward, not hopeful, hardly thinking, aware that his one feeble chance lay in dropping both of the knife-armed Japanese and then turning upon whoever was opening the massive door. He struck once, felt the impact of bone against bone; he felt also the sting of steel, tried for a second blow, and then was hurled to the floor under suffocating, stinking bodies.

Red flashed before his eyes, and he wondered whether he were just recovering from the smash received on the lake-path. It must be a dream. In another moment he would awake, to find Choshimu telling him that he had stumbled, in the dark, from the path, and struck his head on the rocks below. A dream! The screen was probably propped against the path beside him.

For one fragment of time his eyes opened. He was on the floor, half across the ancient screen of the two gods. Where he had slashed the fabric, trying to reach the unknown man, the material was doubled back, separated into two parts—one that made the face of the screen, upon which the gods were painted, and the other that made the heavier back.

The man with the mocking voice was crying—

"You see how easy it was, after I came to your assistance?"

Westgaard kept his eyes fastened on the inner surface of the screen, indelibly impressed by what he saw. As he felt the room slipping away from him, he actually achieved a grimace—a grotesque, triumphant grin. He knew the Korin at last for what it was.

## IX

WESTGAARD lay in semi-darkness, in gloom which was sulphurous, warm.

A flicker of light from the left sent wan bars across the rocky floor; to his right, in place of wall, was a sheer drop, at the end of which—by the sound and the ascending steam—was boiling water. Westgaard rose painfully to his knees and crept to the edge.

He could see, below, no more than a reddish glow, like a gigantic eye, which winked open and winked closed again. What he was looking at was not water, but boiling, liquid rock. The sight of the molten mass fascinated him.

"You will have ample time to reflect upon the wonders of the world," he heard the same taunting voice say. "Now, however, I have several things to ask you—oh, there is no reason for you to excite yourself; I am not in the room and you can not leap upon me."

Westgaard crawled away from the cauldron and rose to his feet, he leaned against the smooth wall. The speaker was in some passage, from which a barred square window let feeble light into Westgaard's cell.

"Several things to ask you," the man repeated. "I would be interested to learn where you concealed that knife, but I will not ask you that. I would also be interested to know many other things, but since you are so anxious to study natural wonders, I will get to my business, dear fellow. Who did you say sent you here?"

"I told you, but you do not believe me."

"And that is all you have to say?"

"The truth."

"Do you hear anything, American?"

Westgaard listened. Wind through the passages? No—more than that!

"If you torture that boy—" he choked.

"Just his feet in a boiling pool—that is all. And since he—and you—no longer have any place to go, feet are of no importance."

Westgaard felt each frantic cry of terror tear at his heart. He said suddenly:

"You can't get anything by torturing either of us. If it is made worth my while to tell—if you offer freedom as a reward perhaps I might—"

"Lie again? No. You have had your chance. The time will come when even life in the caves will be preferable to the way we can kill you. Am I plain enough?"

He was; Westgaard did not answer.

"You have long legs," the man told him pleasantly. "We will let you down an inch or so a day and soon you will be pleading for life, or death."

He heard Choshimu's cry again. Then, unexpectedly, he began to laugh.

"It doesn't work," he ventured, and was silent.

The other made a clucking noise.

"Next time it will, for we will not play-act," he said. "So you guessed that we were threatening the boy only? Let us see how well you can guess next time."

The finality of everything began to work on Westgaard. He saw now that only death was before him, or that which was worse than death. He stepped away from the wall, as if facing the end of life at the present moment. If he must die, if Choshimu must die, better rapidly, quickly.

"The map you have been making on the screen is very clear," he said gravely, although his heart was pounding.

Silence rewarded him.

The other said, at last, slowly—

"So you really knew why you came!"

And Westgaard wished his own words unsaid.

The man in the corridor had not been sure of Westgaard's errand, and now he, Westgaard, through a lie had blundered into what meant absolute death, when, before, it might not have happened; not death and, if the man were convinced that Westgaard really wanted only the screen for the A-I to sell, not torture.

Blundered he had; blunder on he must.

"Do you think I came for the view?" he asked. "And, if I do not return to Tokyo in another day, in just one day, those who follow me will also know what they are after—and who!"

"You lie!"

"Have it as you will."

"It would have been better to have allowed you to come unmolested!"

"Much better."

The other's voice rose.

"I thought you might hear something in Denshaiko," he said, half to himself. "It was so easy to have you frightened away—so very easy."

Westgaard said—

"Oh, we knew what was going on up here."

"You lie again! None save a few of the villagers know of these caves; they were closed for years. None save I in this whole land know of the map—so I thought. But I was afraid some fool might say something, and a white man listens where an Oriental minds his own affairs."

"You have a good organization," Westgaard suggested.

The man laughed.

"I? That is not mine, oh fool," he said agreeably. "I merely turned it to my purpose. A society of young Japanese patriots, intent upon keeping art treasures in the country of their origin. Japanese patriots! Swearing allegiance to emperor and sun gods and twenty-legged turtles and the empire!" He laughed again. "It is safe to tell you the colossal joke! Making patriots work for us! We are doing the same thing in China; I laugh every time I think of it!"

A second time the alert Westgaard tried an experiment.

"It must be dangerous to store explosives in a place like this."

"Carefully packed, my friend, and we keep them away from the more heated places in the caves."

"You will need to replenish your supply near the highest tunnel in the railway. I ran across your hiding-place on my way to Denshaiko." Again Westgaard avoided reference to Mamatsu.

"You know too much!" Then, more calmly, "You found it by accident, eh? Now—" mockingly, in his usual tone—"if you had the map I have been making behind the face of the screen, you would know where all of the dynamite is hidden—where there are rifles—where there are friends—where—where, in fact, everything is." He began to laugh. "And we will be able to exhibit the Korin all over Japan, by means of our patriotic young Japanese. And many will come to see it and afterwards, a man or two will examine the inside privately and know all we dare not tell him. And at no danger to any one! Is it not perfect?"

"No. It was, but it isn't now." Westgaard forced himself to speak casually. He recognized the hidden man's desire to talk, to boast, almost to confide. "The A-I know that they tried to buy the screen, and—if I do not return—failed. How about the copy in the temple?"

The unknown answered both questions:

"They tried to buy it and failed. That is of no importance. As to the copy, who ever comes to Denshaiko? None will know it is here or is not here. And all of the time the young patriots are cheering me, they will really be assisting me. I have grown so fond of the screen that, when the revolution is over, and the red of the sun flag has spread all over the white portion of the banner, I believe I will take the screen with me back to Russia. Ah, the patriots!"

The aroma of a Turkish-tobacco cigaret drifted across Westgaard's nostrils. It, the fact that the other was smoking, indicated to Westgaard that he was very satisfied with himself. There was only one more thing to try.

"I have always hated the capitalists," he suggested meaningly.

The man in the corridor laughed again.

"Even if I believed you, you know too much," he retorted. "There is nothing in it but for you to remain here until you are no longer dangerous. I am not so certain, now, that I shall kill you. You are at least some one to talk with, eh? These stinking brown brothers tire me, and I am sick to death of talking to them of gods and devils of the mountain!"

So that was how the Red had wormed his way in?

"Gods and devils! I beat that old priest at his old game. My gods knew where a couple of gold yen might be found, after I placed them there, his gods were only good to pray to, and did nothing for him. And so, little by little, I gained first their confidence and next their fear, until now they believe I am almost a god myself."

Westgaard said—

"You might give me a cigaret." He lighted what was thrown him. The ordinary action soothed, strengthened him. "Why didn't you let me get away with the fake screen?"

"Because it would have made talk when the real one was exhibited all over the empire."

"But shooting, poisoning, my absence—will that make no talk?"

"For a day, a week. And then it will be forgotten. And it will be some time before the screen is ready, before all of our plans are perfect."

"Who places the explosives so you can disrupt all traffic?"

"That—" and Westgaard could almost see him grin— "is no affair of yours. But I tell you this much; some few I placed myself, for the experience; the rest was done by many different men, and for many different reasons. Why, I had some placed in Yokohama by a Japanese who is in love with a fat brown nurse in a hospital, and intends, with my help, to blow his way into the sleeping-quarters. And then—"

"But suppose some one talks?"

"It would delay us, naturally. We have been very lucky. However, no man knows of many places. That is why we have the map. And when we strike, my friend, we strike. Look at China! Does it all seem like a dream to you? Perhaps if I told you all I knew, you would see—but I am not going to tell you!"

"You've already told me enough to make me see that you are preparing for success."

A fanatical note crept into the mocking voice.

"Success. What else? First the yellow and brown nations, and then—"

Westgaard guessed what he meant. He thought that the Red had paused; he decided wisely enough to say nothing more, but heard next the whisper of some voice in Japanese; what was said he was unable to hear, no matter how hard he tried.

"Who was that fat Japanese?" the Red snapped.

Westgaard did not dissemble.

"He came here for the water-cure," he said shortly.

"He lied if he told you that."

"Perhaps he did. I only met him on the train."

"He lied, just as you lied. He has not been near the water. He roams around like an ant in a kitchen. Who is he? You do not know? What does he want? You do not know? Well—" snarling— "We will find that out very shortly. I know where he goes. If it makes you any happier, he is near you—but on the slope of the mountain. He said he wanted exercise. Bah!"

His conversational boasting and confidential mood was gone.

"Rot, die of thirst, or jump into the cauldron," he threw at Westgaard and was gone.

## X

WHAT could a fat Japanese do for him? How might Mamatsu find his way through the labyrinth? Westgaard himself did not know exactly where he was in the caves. And why should Mamatsu come after him? Mamatsu was some one; more, the corpulent Nipponese apparently knew of the screen and knew what he was about; but what help was that to Westgaard?

The door was thrown open, and Choshimu was tossed into the room. Westgaard caught him before the boy stumbled over the edge of the rock-floor.

"They told me that if I hungered I should eat of your body," he sobbed. "Oh, *danna-san*, this is a place of devils. Let us go home."

What was he to tell the boy? He needed to tell him nothing.

"I can die like a man," Choshimu said in a thin voice. "It—it is hard to die, *danna-san*."

Westgaard slipped his arm about the shaking shoulders.

"They were going to throw me into a pool of steam," Choshimu told the white man. "I cried out, and then they all laughed. I can see a little light below it now," Choshimu whispered. "Perhaps there is a way out from that terrible place."

The cauldron was fully fifty feet below; the rock descending to it was nothing but concrete volcanic neck, smooth, without crack or crevice. It actually sloped away from the cave-shelf where man and boy were.

"It is a *jigoku*—a hell," the boy mouthed. "But there is a way out! Can even the foam—steam—stay in this place?"

Westgaard examined the steam without interest. It did rise, cover the far wall, kept away from the cell by the draft of air through the barred window, and slowly creep down to disappear somewhere near the molten pool. Descent, however, was impossible. The wall was smooth, sloping in. There was no rock about the pool; the waving surface of half-liquid, half-solid lava seemed to be bottled completely in rock.

"Come away from the edge," Westgaard said.

Choshimu heard defeat, hopelessness; he neither wailed nor whimpered, but he followed Westgaard, to sit very closely beside him. Hopelessness. They would never get out. The futility of the situation, the closeness of death, slowly rose to choke the white man.

He felt, he supposed, as a convicted murderer must feel. He awaited death. But even a murderer was fed up to the last, was given water, and even hoped that some respite was possible. He had been told that they expected a reprieve, a stay of sentence, until the warden came to say—

"I'm sorry, but it is time—"

No reprieve was possible to him; he knew it fully. The Red would never have told him anything if he had intended to let Westgaard go. It was final. Choshimu would die first, and he would be left with the dead boy's body. Horrible! There was no day, no night; the rock-cell remained semi-black, hideous with blacker shadow and pale streaks of light. Choshimu whimpered—

"How long have we been here?"

How long indeed? Minutes? Hours? More than that? Westgaard did not know.

The Red would return, perhaps, and talk with him again. Westgaard did not want to hear him. Did the other desire to see him weaken and plead, as he slipped from life? There came to him a swift desire to pray, but he did not move his lips. He thought—

"God can do the impossible, but why should I ask Him? He did not tell me to come."

No day, no night; only passing minutes on dragging feet; passing minutes, darkness and the winking red eye below.

His voice was husky, his throat tight, as he said—

"Don't be afraid, little Choshimu." He himself knew fright; not terror, but fright.

His arm had gone round the boy, remained there frankly. The fatalism of his years in the East began to surge to the surface. If it were ordered, it was ordered. Better to face death firmly, before he was weak.

"We need only step from the edge," he said, as to himself.

Choshimu shrank back.

"If you—hold my hand—when we go—"

"No, not yet. Mamatsu might; some one might—the Red could change his fanatical mind. Something could happen—"

So, sanity told him, the condemned man figured in the death cell, with the guards of the death-watch joking with him, with the priest praying while the hangman saw to his noose. Minutes. Hours. Through the corridors came the sweet sound of the little bell.

"They pray," Choshimu whispered unsteadily. "How can they asked the gods to be good when they—"

Westgaard said only—

"Hush!"

The sound of the bell died away.

"I regret that I have but one watch," the mockingly pleasant voice called from the door. "You have been here an hour, my friend. Every hour I will come and tell you the time; it will be diversion for me. Does the stream make you thirsty? Think! There is a great lake just outside, a lake filled with cool water. If you believe in morals, and you come from a very moral nation, I suggest that this show you the error of trying to stop a juggernaut—the great red chariot of fate."

Before Westgaard could retort the other was gone.

"He laughs at us," Choshimu said.

"He will never laugh at us again."

Westgaard stood up, pulling the boy gently after him.

"It will not hurt, baby," he said softly. "Hold to my hand—so. Close your eyes." A step nearer the pit. "Think of all the gods who are watching you. The great gods who admire bravery!"

Blasphemy? Westgaard did not believe that it was. His head was very clear. He uttered no prayer for himself; it came to him at that moment that there was a god who cared most for little children, and who had said— As steam rose to his face, he heard the mocking laugh again. Had he swayed forward? Was he falling? Had he stepped from the edge, Choshimu with him? Falling, yes, but away from the chasm.

The room shook, creaked; rock against rock screamed in agony. Higher, terrible in tone, he heard a human scream, a scream crushed out into mere exhaled air.

Back and forth he swayed, near the pit, away from it, willy-nilly. The floor of the rock-chamber lurched him flat on his face, Choshimu tumbling also. The mountain thundered; somewhere in the caves the echoing cry of "*Kaminari!* God of thunder!" reached Westgaard's dazed ears.

Once again the floor rose with him, buckling, screaming. Steam from the cauldron singed his face; a shower of icy water drenched him; the cauldron below hissed and spat, and then the room steadied, the screaming died to a grumbling and, at the very end, silence.

"The—the earth has been torn in the hands of the thunder god," Choshimu breathed.

The rocks seemed still to tremble; no louder than their shiver Westgaard heard a whisper:

"I—die! Rock—rock—rock—"

Westgaard, for the first time, stepped to the barred window. He could see nothing, save that rock had filled the corridor; yet under the mass was a man, the man who had directed their capture.

"Tell me your name, and I'll try to get some one to hear me," Westgaard pleaded earnestly.

No answer. Westgaard was certain that the other spat. He called, nevertheless:

"Your master is hurt. He's dying!" and as the "—ing!" was echoed back at him, he repeated the words in Japanese.

No answer. Westgaard pulled at the bars and found them set firm in rock. He set himself and tried grimly to move them.

"He died quickly, and that is more than he would have permitted us," Choshimu said. The boy's eyes flashed. "He died, and he is dead," he added.

"Don't gloat or I'll—"

"Beat me," the urchin cried, so joyously that Westgaard faced about wildly.

The boy could do no more than point, and cry—

"Look! Look!"

To the edge of the rock-shelf Westgaard stepped. Rock had tumbled down from above; a way—rough, terrible—was ready for their feet. The boiling pool had lowered, receded, and, beside it, partially concealed by the lessening steam, was a fissure through which light filtered. How large the crack was, where it led, whether a man might stand on the rocks below, whether a man might even be able to achieve the lower level, Westgaard did not know; sudden elation, the possibility of action, attempt, surged through him. Choshimu's face was beaming.

"We go," Choshimu howled and began to scramble down. Westgaard followed him at once.

After the smooth, creviceless wall, the rocks had appeared possible; once on them, the difficulty increased with every descending step. Here was a foothold; here no more than a crack in the rock for a toe.

How long the descent took neither knew.

Rock had been dislodged by the earthquake to make a narrow ledge about the side of the pool nearest the opening; along this, man and boy picked their way. Some of the rocks were hot, but most were of the regular temperature; there was no way of telling which had been vomited out of the cauldron, which had dropped from the walls of the empty chimney.

Westgaard, hope rising, half expected that the widened crack led to the exterior of the mountain. It led merely to a corridor, a passage lighted from some lower chamber.

Along this dim, rocky way they walked rapidly, clambering over a pile of rock which almost blocked the way, crawling where the rock-roof had sunken. Here and there other passages ran from the one they followed; Westgaard kept toward the light and finally came to the room hung with silk and ornamented with paintings and carvings of the gods.

The first thing he saw was the screen. Through a portion of it a rock had hurtled. The wind god was missing entirely, torn from the frame. But the second, Kaminari of the thunder, held to his bolts, his painted hair streaming, his nostrils expanded, as if he were breathing powerfully through them.

From the burning bean-oil lamps Westgaard guessed that the occupants had fled hurriedly, when the earth shook, or that possibly the Russian, who was now dead, had been in the room just before paying Westgaard, his victim, the last visit. His opinion was verified by the open rock-road, by two open doors, one each way.

Three doors into the silk-hung room; one through which he had come, the other behind the screen; the third must be the way out. While Choshimu chattered that he hurry, Westgaard peered into the black void behind the screen; next he stooped for a lamp and stared again.

A dozen rocks had tumbled into the room he saw—a room partially filled with crates and boxes, some of which bore the red label of danger.

A second quake—rock on those boxes of explosives! The thought was too horrible to contemplate, and Westgaard wheeled about. He cried to the ready Choshimu to have patience and, despite something akin to panic, he ripped the fabric of the screen from the wooden supports and folded it swiftly; with it in his hand he left the vaulted rock chamber.

## XI

HIS OTHER hand carried the lamp. Gusts of alternately warm and chill air threatened the flame. Strange grinding noises spurred white man and brown child. They began at last to run, sliding down narrow steps, rushing pell-mell along the way.

As they neared the grotto, the path became more difficult. Westgaard handed the lamp and fabric of the screen to Choshimu and carried him slowly along. Other than shivering, the boy made no sound or movement.

The two candles were still burning above the grotto. One, indeed, had gutted out; all were close to extinction. Fearful Japanese, Westgaard decided, had seized the largest of the tapers as they fled, leaving the remainder almost consumed.

As he set Choshimu on his feet again, the boy wailed bitterly:

"The boat! The boat is gone!"

Westgaard's heart throbbed for a moment, but he was able to say, "What of that?" with seeming nonchalance. The effort cost him something. Straight to the edge of the water the man strode. His upper garments were stripped off before he reached the pool; he stood naked beside it.

The material from the screen he rolled tightly, binding it about with cloth from his discarded shirt; he tied the cylindrical packet securely to his belt. The belt he slipped over his head and under his right arm, so that it rested across his back and chest diagonally. He arranged it so that the bundle was at his left shoulder. What happened to the remnant of the screen was really unimportant now, save that he wanted it; life—life was the thing he intended to fight for.

His white body, against the gloom of the grotto, seemed very pale and slender; the light from the high candles touched it to silver—an image, a symbol; strength, yes, but more—courage.

What the white-bodied man was about to attempt might be impossible, yet he had no intention of faltering. His face was to the low black opening, where water ran into the grotto. What currents there were, whether the lake might have a tide, whether the earthquake had blocked the way—he thought of none of these. Outside was the world. His hand went clumsily about Choshimu.

"You are to hold to this belt, so," he told the shivering boy, also naked. "If you let go, no matter what happens, you will be beaten as never before!"

"I can not swim far," the boy murmured.

"Hold to the belt and you will live to be beaten," Westgaard said huskily.

With that he stepped into the water. Westgaard did not swim at first, but waded until pressure told him Choshimu was off his feet; then slowly he swam toward the black opening, leading out of the grotto. Leisurely he paddled into blackness and turned slowly for the side. He groped for the rope, along which the boatmen had pulled their craft into the grotto with Westgaard. The rope was not there. He turned and swam more rapidly to the other side. No rope!

He swam ahead in the dead blackness and tried the walls again.

Panic seized him for a moment, and was passed on to the boy behind him; then, with a grunt, Westgaard turned so as to face light and grotto; he looked up. He saw at once that the rope was really there and had not been removed by the fleeing Japanese; it was there, but higher than he had expected, at the right height for a man kneeling in a boat.

Hand over hand, he pulled himself and Choshimu farther from the grotto. The swish of the water told him that they were rounding an angle in the rock.

Utter blackness. The water was cold and growing colder.

It was not possible to do other than drag his and Choshimu's bodies along. The rope was too high for the water to lift him to it. It took effort, effort growing greater every minute, to advance.

Westgaard paused, but dared not ease his aching arms by letting go of the rope; in the dark he might flounder about and never find it again.

His head began to throb anew; the pain proved to him that endurance has a limit. He began to pull himself and his burden slowly along the rope.

A sudden stream of heated water seared him and made Choshimu wriggle and cry with pain. The unexpected movement on his back made him loose one hand, to hang by the other desperately, fiercely. Grimly he clawed upward, while the muscles in the other arm fought to raise his body—ah, both hands to the rope again!

No time, no breath to chide Choshimu. What breath he had was beginning to come in harsh, gurgling gulps. He could go no farther. Not another inch. This was the end. But farther he went.

It made no difference whether eyes were open or shut. The water-tomb was the same forbidding void. Blackness ahead, the murk of the grave behind.

His arms no longer had feeling; he advanced still more slowly. One pull—one pull—he couldn't. He must!

The water seemed to tear at him with increasingly savage strength, fighting to drag him from the rope, even as he fought to hold to it. Choshimu shouted something to him; the subterranean passage roared and reverberated with the echo. The white man shook the sound from his deadened ears; what the words were he did not know. A hand along the rope, a pull. Hand along the rope—pull. Like pulling on some great bell-cord, with never a sound issuing from the corolla of bronze. Perhaps, his tired mind thought, a ghost bell in a land of ghosts. Heated drops rained down on him, but he did not feel them.

One hand ahead, the other hand ahead. Over and over. Automatically. Over and over. The final grasp to life.

Some water-thing, cold, spineless, whiskered, ran from the rope down his arm, to drop with a splash into the invisible murk of water. A strange sound began to thrum in his ears. Mournful, indeterminate, minor as the jangle of *samisen.* Was Choshimu trying to speak to him? Was that bell back in the cavern ringing? Or was it imagination? What matter?

Cold water over his head shocked him to sensibility. The rope—had it snapped? He tugged fiercely at what his hands still clung to, felt the blessed rope grow taut, but remained under the icy water. He pulled more carefully, steadily and, as his body moved ahead, he rose almost at once to the surface.

A staple, a fastening, not made for anything save guiding a boat, had pulled out from the weight of two bodies dragging through water. Choshimu, choking, still held to the belt. Westgaard's head was clear now, with grim clarity. He knew that he could go little farther. His arms no longer had feeling. Each grip on the rope told him that his fingers held only because they were shaped, talonlike, to the hemp.

Yet, somehow, he still advanced, jerkily, slowly. Sometimes he pulled and gained not an inch. Again and again he was forced to hang limply from the support, while the water tore at his body. He thought soberly—

"If we had jumped into the cauldron, it would have been over in less than a second."

Was he giving up? His head was clear. Strange things, arms and muscles, that they should be so weak, so cowardly. The thing to do was to drive them, drive them—but they would not be driven.

Sweat from the tremendous effort began to streak his face, to trickle saltily into eyes and mouth. Ah, just one more pull, arms, and another—another.

Somewhere in the world, workers must be rising from sleep, calling to one another; there might even be the sun. He would never see the sun again. Would see — see nothing — a void — blackness. The word startled him as he thought of it. Not black—gray!

Choshimu began to cry horribly at the same moment.

Westgaard knew beyond any doubting that the hue of the water had changed, that the invisible walls were taking color, substance, shape. Yet he had no endurance left, no hidden store of energy, nothing bred of exaltation to draw upon; he was tired, exhausted. Choshimu's lips were to his ear.

"Let me hold the rope, and you hold to me," the boy breathed. "I can not pull you, but after you have rested—"

Westgaard gasped, his voice strange and hoarse—

"I should have thought of that before."

"I tried to tell you, but you would not listen."

Choshimu grasped the rope with eager fingers. Westgaard slowly slid down, until he was buoyed by the water. He held to Choshimu's middle with one arm and began to beat the other up and down in the water, to rub it back and forth against his chest; he slapped himself again and again and gradually felt his fingers begin to tingle. The other arm he treated the same. Finally, he said—

"Without you I would have gone no further, Choshimu."

"Could I do less for you, after what—"

"If you begin to blubber, great baby, I will beat you here and now." It was almost light enough to see, light enough, surely, to determine rock and water. "Hold to my belt, and I will show you how the *seiyojin* swim, infant."

It was necessary to husband his strength; he swam slowly and steadily. The weariness did not leave him as the water became lighter, but he knew that he could swim for a long time. A sharp angle in the rock made him almost double upon himself and then, all at once, he was in the outer air.

The moon was wheeling low; the air was gray and somber with the ending of the night. Westgaard thought he had never seen so bright a moon, never smelled such delicious air. Around the last jutting rock he swam, and along the edge of the cliff. At the first ledge he crawled ashore.

He did not want the sun to warm him, to churn his blood alive again. It was enough to stand.

"I'm not floating in that tunnel for the water-rats to eat. I've got a body and it's mine; a brain and it's mine. I'm alive!"

Above him he could see a path, which must lead to Denshaiko. How many peasants passed along it, unaware of the concealed tunnel, the grotto, the caves, below? Choshimu was crying, his head in his arms.

"What now?" the man asked gently.

"I—I—" The boy turned his face toward his master. "I can be brave, but I am hungry," he lied valiantly.

"We go to the village and—"

Westgaard stopped.

The ground beneath him trembled gently, back and forth; the easy motion changed to a terrific heave, throwing both man and boy against the cliff. There was a muffled roar and the earth was still again.

"The god!" groaned Choshimu.

Westgaard believed that somewhere along the cliffs he had seen a flash of red; that flame had spurted up through some air-vent into the caves.

"No," he said, "not the god. Merely the implements of those who compete with him." Since he spoke in English, Choshimu nodded gravely, understanding no word.

A loosened rock, Westgaard believed, must have dropped on the cases in the room behind the chamber where the screen had been. He peered below. The jutting rock, which had concealed the entrance into the underground passage, had vanished into the lake. No trace of opening remained. The cliffs seemed to be solid rock again.

"We have a story to tell, but who will ever believe us?" he said aloud.

His body naked, white against the cliffs, he started toward Denshaiko, the boy trotting behind him. He was not cold, only very tired, although his eyes, despite the sleepless night, were clear and bright. It rather surprized him that the village blazed with lights. Every hut seemed to throw dancing yellow out into the lake. As he walked, the bell of the temple began to beat, not peacefully, not regularly, but wildly, as if in summons.

Man and boy began to walk more rapidly.

## XII

THE PRIEST of the temple was praying in a room filled to the outer panels with Japanese. As he prayed he called out the names of his people. Not their true names, but *kaimyo*—soul names—to be used only after death. A strange prayer:

*Koto shiro nushi no Kami*
*Oho kuni nushi no Kami.*

Lamps burned wanly. The room was weary with the deadly pre-dawn. The hour when anything might happen.

"You are all to die," Sosamo told them in his canking voice. "I can already see your souls gathering, with white wrappings about their heads. *Koto shiro nushi no Kami!* I can see the death-lanterns. You have been laboring for devils; what it is you have done, I do not know, but you can not fool the gods. They are not old; they are always young. They know. *Oho kuni nushi no Kami!* Sit, O fools! Can you hope to run from the earth? Kaminari of the thunder will shake it again and shake it open and you will all be swallowed into it.

"None of you ever worshipped—what? You worshipped elsewhere? Worshipped the god in a mountain-shrine? *Mah!* This is his dwelling-place. He has no other. I am his priest."

His hand rose, steady with excitement. He permitted no further word from any of the villagers, some of whom tried protestation. Mingled with the Denshaiko men were peasants from the hills, driven to the temple by the quake.

"The god was patient with you," Sosamo cried. "He was patient, but at last he has come."

His voice fainted down, like a dying wind across the lake. Eye after eye followed his. What they saw sent tongues cleaving to the roofs of mouths.

The first arrows of the sun had shot across the lake. They touched only one thing in all that room—the fair hair of a naked man, turning it, like the hair of the god, to beaten gold.

About the loins of this apparition—no man could be so tall—was a bit of bright silk, snatched up before entering the temple; across his chest was a belt, to which was fastened something cylindrical, shaped like the thunderbolts of the god himself. And his eyes—blue, gold, rimmed with red! There was no doubt; it was, to the overwrought, already frightened Japanese, nothing of the world, but some messenger from the throne of heaven, possibly even the dread god himself.

None wanted a second look. All sprang from their knees and rushed wildly from the temple. Not until they were clear of the building did the first terrified cry rise. Straight along the lake-path, away from village and mountain, the villagers hurried, none brave enough now for even a backward look.

"You even made me wonder for a moment," Westgaard heard.

Westgaard did not grin.

"You still here, Mamatsu?" he asked; then, as if to himself—

"Made it!"

Mamatsu's eyes were bulging. His lips worked, but he said never a word. The ancient priest was on his knees.

"I have seen a miracle," he whispered, his head buried in the sleeves of his kimono, to shut out the vision. "A miracle! After all these years, a miracle!"

"Leave him to his visions," Mamatsu breathed to the white man. "Let us go where I can find you food, clothing. It will be only a kimono and will cover you but half. Gods of heaven, Westgaard-san; your feet are in ribbons!"

They left the priest on the floor, crying with joy. Choshimu was sitting wearily outside the temple.

"Did you drive them all out, *danna-san?*" he asked. "They ran as if the devils were after them."

Mamatsu smiled at the boy.

"I see you know the powers of your master," he said.

Mamatsu entered the first house that he came to that was more than a hut; he pulled drawer after drawer out of cupboards until he found under and over-kimonos for the white man. While the Japanese blew up the brazier and set about boiling water for tea, Westgaard washed and bandaged his feet. With the bandages in place he bound on straw sandals. Choshimu, rapidly recovering, but heavy with sleep now, paraded about in a silk kimono too large for him.

THE CUSHIONS were soft; Westgaard stretched out on them luxuriously. Food had been eaten, many cups of scalding tea consumed. A cigaret from Mamatsu's packet fumed between his fingers.

"Now," the plump Japanese said, "the story!"

"Why are you still here?" Westgaard asked.

Mamatsu shrugged.

"What else was there for me to do?" he countered. "I hoped to reach the lower villages before you. There is another, steeper path, unused save by wood-cutters. Sosamo-san told me of it. You were right, I wanted the screen also. But—" looking into Westgaard's eyes—"not as an object of art."

Westgaard said thoughtfully:

"You'll never believe what I tell you, and I am not certain it is wise to talk of what I've seen. But I'll tell you this, Mamatsu, the screen of the temple would have done you no good!"

"Is it so?" Mamatsu dropped his cigaret into the brazier and lighted a second before repeating, "Is it so?"

"Then what I sought was concealed in a copy?"

"In the original. I want to talk well enough, but it depends a great deal upon who hears me. I've not lied, except to say that I knew about volcanoes; I work for the A-I. But you?"

Mamatsu sat silently.

"If you know what I came for, and

what I hoped to find concealed in the screen, you can guess my business well enough."

"You are one interested in retaining valuable and ancient art-objects in Japan?"

Mamatsu retorted:

"That is how we first became suspicious of the business! I? Art? I am more interested in a new way to cook turtles! You know who I am."

Slowly Westgaard, entirely convinced, even though the other showed no ornate badge gilded with the seal of the empire, began to talk. Again and again Mamatsu interrupted him with:

"They have got as far as that?" and, "A scheme of the devil!" and, "It seems foolish, but look what they do in China, those Reds!" And, at the very end, "what a thing that was, through the rock tunnel!"

Westgaard concluded with—

"I've got the fabric from the screen."

"Names? Places? Are they both on it?"

Westgaard said:

"Both. But the plans were not complete. That's why—"

"I understand it all—all. And now I will not be able to breathe until I get both the material and yourself into Tokyo!" Soberly, "You were a foil for me, my friend. All eyes were upon you once you started for Denshaiko; it enabled me to go unnoticed." He looked thoughtful. "I wonder if that was the intention!"

"If my people sent me knowing what it was I really should get, what it meant—if they knew you were going also—"

"What then?"

Westgaard smiled wearily.

"I will wait until I'm back in an A-I office before deciding," he said.

Choshimu had rolled himself in a *futon* and, fed, was snoring bravely on the matting.

"Are you not sleepy?" Mamatsu asked.

"Yes. I suppose that I am. But—" smiling— "I'm as anxious to get away from here as you are."

"It will be a trick, getting through the railway town," Mamatsu agreed. "They—these mealy-mouthed young patriots who are tools, or more than tools, for all we know—will be waiting for you; they will know nothing of what has happened here, unless the villagers keep running all that distance. You had better give the screen to me. No? Well, we go together. Now? Good! And we will go by the shorter way."

He stood up.

"I do not need my bags," he said. "I have slept without sleeping-clothes before. And while I am fat, I am stronger than you might think." He stooped and picked up the sleeping boy. "I will carry him and when I tire you can help. Come, let us go before the village-fools return."

As they passed the temple he began to chuckle.

"The priest is still praying," he laughed. "You will go down into history as a miracle."

Mist rose from the lake, curling about the base of the cliffs like pink lotus-petals. Peaks and cones were bathed in sunlight.

"Take your last look at the mountain that you came to examine," Mamatsu continued, still smiling. "*Ai-ya!* You examined it better than you thought. You gods of heaven and earth, what have we now?"

Even before they heard the roar, they saw that which seemed unbelievable.

The highest peak of the mountain was lifted bodily from its foundations, was flung into myriad fragments and hurled into the air. Explosion followed explosion; clouds of steam shot into the air with thunderous noises. Pitchy darkness, followed instantly by warm rain and, then, toward them, a ghastly torrent tearing down the steep sides of the mountain.

Neither man moved. Both stood stock-still. Choshimu, in Mamatsu's arms, did not stir.

"It seems we are to die," the Japanese whispered.

The top of the mountain had been torn

up by the roots. The sun had been blotted out.

"I have heard that *jisshin** precedes eruption," the Japanese muttered. "I did not remember. This is an earthquake land—*ahhh!*

Down the side of the mountain the mass of rock, mud, lava, tore. A rock dropped near them; a second, hurled high from the vent, smashed into the lake. Westgaard looked swiftly around.

"Stand against the tree-trunk," he ordered. "Be no good, but better than in the open."

Close to the tree the two men stood, eyes only on the descending torrent.

Black, slimed with the green of molten mineral, the mass hurtled down the side of the mountain. Rocks from above began to splash steadily into the lake. Catapulted boulders crashed down like terrible rain through the trees, searing the grass to brown near where they fell. The earth beneath them seemed to smoke, to writhe in pain.

Neither man spoke. There was no longer anything to say. The futility of his earlier escapes beat upon Westgaard. He was glad that Choshimu slept. Mamatsu's words rattled gurglingly:

"Look! Devils of hell, look!"

The flow had neared the lake. At a huge projecting peak it seemed to hesitate, to waver, to rush back upon itself, pile high all along its front. Then, with new force, it swerved to the right, found new gullies and torrented ahead, away from the village, away from the fascinated men.

A cloud of steam streamed up from the lake as the first of the flow reached it; grayness, heat, stench, the hiss of steam, encompassed the entire valley.

It was no longer possible to see clearly what was happening. As Westgaard's eyes strained, a rush of water poured over him, drenchingly; before he could do more than grasp the tree, water was over his head; water, first cold; then tepid.

Roaring was in his ears. His arms were about Mamatsu and about the tree also; the fingers of one hand clawed into the Japanese' skin. Mamatsu seemed to be trying to pull away, to rise to the surface, but the white man fought to keep them all where they were. His lungs began to ache, his head to ring.

Should he let go and rise to the surface? The surface of—what? What was becoming of the lake?

Air! Instant, like rising to the surface, although he was still clinging to the trunk of the tree. Mamatsu was gasping; Choshimu was wailing that he dreamed of terror and could not awake.

The lake? There was no lake! Only a wide streaming river which flowed away from the mountain and toward the village of Denshaiko, toward and through it. The crest of the temple stood above the water; there was nothing else. Far to the right, where once had been a forest and a forest-path, were bare blazing stumps, around which swirled yellow-green-brown rivers of mud.

"We—saw—the making—of the earth," Mamatsu stammered, spitting water, "and we—live to tell of it." He plumped down squarely on his knees, dropping Choshimu. "I will never doubt the gods again!"

The air was lighter. Above the mountain, visible again, was a gigantic steam-cloud; behind that, the blue of the sky.

It was in Westgaard's mind to tell Mamatsu that he was praying, because his own life had been miraculously spared; but a glance at the Japanese' intent face kept the words from issuing.

He had been tired before and exhausted; he believed now that he had previously reached the limit of thought and endurance. The debacle left him still, cold, almost entirely unshaken. He had made his fight for life in the tunnel; this was accident, luck; the other had been different.

"We must try to find the path the priest spoke about," he said, placing a hand on Mamatsu's shoulder.

"Yes, the path." Mamatsu shuddered.

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*Earthquake

"The one we came here on—the one the villagers took—that's gone."

Westgaard repeated—

"Gone."

He knew that the men who had been on it were gone also, but even this did not shock him. He had seen too much, experienced too much, already.

Masses of hot rock, smoking jagged blocks of lava, had completely dammed the lake, less than a quarter-mile from where they had been standing. The level of the water had been raised until the path was a scant foot above the newly-formed river. Where the escaping waters rushed, after tearing over Denshaiko, Westgaard did not know. Cliffs, on the far side, had disappeared entirely.

It was impossible to recognize the lake, the once verdant valley, for what it had been. What had been cool, placid lake had been turned into a devil-playground, filled with erupted material, possibly flawed and raised by the action of the earth; now it resembled the giant building-blocks of fiends' offspring.

Neither Caucasian nor Oriental had been able to keep track of time. How long the actual eruption had lasted they did not know; how long they stood watching they did not know. Time had stopped.

"Sosamo knew," Mamatsu said at last. "He said the villagers were to die, and they are dead."

Not until the three were on the drenched path leading away from the former village did the pudgy Japanese return to reality.

"We will not be stopped. Nor questioned in Yasudo, now. Your business, my affairs, have certainly been forgotten. Whoever in Yasudo was interested in the screen has other things to think about. It has been many years since the mountains here spat fire. It will be simple for us to take the train and return."

He walked ahead, glancing from time to time toward Westgaard.

"What is the saying in your land?" he asked abruptly. "That it is an awful earthquake which accomplishes only damage?"

Westgaard nodded, recognizing the Japanese' fight for the commonplace, for control.

As they started down the path, Choshimu cried—

"I see nothing of the temple—only water."

Mamatsu choked out—

"We should have brought the priest with us!"

If death had taken Sosamo while he was still in ecstasy over the imagined miracle, the priest had died happily. Curious that the money paid for the fraudulent screen could never do any good to either priest or temple. Westgaard had paid for the Korin; he had it strapped against his skin. Curious! The venture must be over. Nothing remained save to stir the dregs.

## XIII

THE OFFICES of the A-I in Tokyo are as like those in Osaka as two peas. They are high above the street. Telephones connect them with the outside world; in their filing-cases are letters and orders; typewriters click and adding-machines whirr; clerks make endless trips to the water-jugs.

Mamatsu had wired his own chief from a station along the line, arranging for a meeting in the A-I offices. He had merely telegraphed him to be at the Asiatic-Import the following morning; he made no mention of Westgaard or of the screen. To Westgaard, at the time of sending the message, he remarked that one never knew who read telegrams and that he had not the patience to code a wire.

After sending the telegram he had bought for Westgaard the largest kimono to be found, together with the hugest pair of shoes. The white man's feet were so cut that footgear other than straw sandals over fresh bandages were impossible, even had the shoes been large enough.

Westgaard had been certain that sleep, on the train, was not to come but, with

Mamatsu sitting beside him, he had slept through the night, to awake refreshed. He had eaten with relish and, as they were finally whirling toward the A-I in a taxi, his lips puckered to a noiseless whistle.

He said to Mamatsu—

"Wonder what happened to the imitation screen?"

The Japanese shrugged.

"Gone," he said. "It is no longer of any importance."

The officials of the A-I were waiting in force for Westgaard. Carstairs, summoned from Osaka, grasped Westgaard's hand; even Sanderson, the Old Man, clapped him on the shoulder.

"We thought you'd been killed until Mr. Ogawa and his friends told us of the wire they received. Where'd you get the outfit, Andy? They tell me Denshaiko's wiped out. You must have run for it, eh?"

"Denshaiko's gone. It was pretty close, Charley."

Mamatsu was whispering to Ogawa; at his words all of the Japanese sucked in their breaths excitedly. Their eyes glistened as they watched Westgaard.

"I've lost a bet on you," Sanderson stated. "Bet Mr. Ogawa that you'd get the Korin screen for them. They wanted it for a museum. Told him you'd never fallen down on anything, but I'm damned if I call this falling down. Fellow isn't responsible for eruptions! And I'd still be willing to bet you'd have bought the screen or stolen it. I'm glad you're back, Andy. Mighty glad. And the bet can be called off or not. That's how glad I am." He made a noise in his throat. "You know what I'm trying to say," he sputtered.

Westgaard said gently—

"You don't lose, Charley. You're lucky. You win. I've got the screen. But I wish you'd told me what you wanted it for—really."

"He didn't know," Carstairs said.

Harrison, from Yokohama, asked:

"Wasn't it for a museum? I heard, down my way, that some old die-hard wouldn't sell—was afraid of what'd happen—"

"What difference did it make who we wanted it for?" Sanderson said uneasily. "I don't understand."

"Your company knew only what we told them," Ogawa interrupted. "We told them as much as seemed wise at the time."

Westgaard felt no resentment.

"I was to get the bullets and Mamatsu the screen?"

He didn't blame them. Possession of the hidden map was Japan's business; to get it they were willing, forced, to use any means, any possible means. He did not see clearly why both Mamatsu and himself had not been told.

"You could have trusted us," he said gravely.

"We have been afraid to trust any one," a Japanese named Setayama stated. "If you knew what we know, what we fear—"

Westgaard could guess well enough.

"The police caught a man who'd been in the building across from my office," Carstairs piped earnestly. "He was merely looking through the place with an idea to rent. Didn't know the offices were already leased. Didn't have any gun on him. He represented some foreign company. Good financial standing. I talked to him; never saw him before. Of course the police let him go."

Westgaard said—

"Naturally, Bill." Ogawa, he believed, winked gravely at him, and he winked in return.

"Bill told me about that foolishness—the shooting," Sanderson said. "Accidents will happen, Andy."

Westgaard looked at the Japanese. Several of them were busy examining the blank wall, but Ogawa met his eyes squarely.

"It is only fair that you tell what you know," Ogawa decided. "Please let it go no further than this room, gentlemen."

Westgaard began by addressing Carstairs.

"I suppose I was spoiling for excitement, Bill," he started. "The notion of the Old Man sending me on a silly errand, after the confounded quiet up in my district, was the last straw." His voice lowered; he spoke soberly, in monotone. Inarticulate at first, he slowly became fluent. He painted them a picture; he could hear the Japanese hiss, hear the white men grunt; he watched Sanderson's right hand creep from his knee to his chin. When he told them of the water-passage, Sanderson's fingers tightened about his jaw, pulling the upper face into slantwise wrinkles.

"And that's what happened," he ended softly.

"They—they nearly killed you," Sanderson muttered.

"Killed him?" Mamatsu snapped. "They killed him again and again, but he did not have sense enough to know it! Could you or I get through that passage? Would we have done what he did? Were we ever taken for a god? There has never been anything like it since the sun goddess sent the sacred crow flying through the vapors of hell!" He groaned. "And all you say is 'They nearly killed you'!"

Westgaard did not say, "It wasn't anything." It was something. He was not elate, but he felt the warmth of satisfaction. He had done the job.

"We knew there were once caves at Denshaiko," Setayama said. "That is, there is a legend about them. Now, Mr. Westgaard, if you are not too tired, tell me what the Russian looked like?"

"I never saw him. That was one of the horrible things—to be killed by a man whose face you have never seen. I'd know that voice of his—but he's dead. You can be very sure of that."

"Dead as last year's blossoms," Mamatsu agreed.

Westgaard pulled open his kimono, unbuckled the belt, untied the roll of fabric. The hair of the thunder god still gleamed. Water had not affected the ancient gilt. Neither had the fabric itself darkened.

"They knew how, in the old days," Ogawa remarked, as he spread the material out on a desk. "Korin was a great artist." He hesitated before separating the face from the reverse of the two fabrics. "If only that Russian used good inks!"

The Russian had. Eyes gloated over the map.

"We will examine the indicated places," Ogawa said cheerfully. "One after another we will draw the wasp's stings. What a plan! After China, Japan; can you see us, crippled, our railways blown up, our docks destroyed, our barracks hurled to heaven? You have done something for us, Mr. Westgaard. No matter how we reward you, it will not be enough. We—"

"May I remind you that I failed, where Westgaard-san succeeded? That he went to the depths and back again for something of no concern to him? That—"

"You need not be afraid for your friend," Ogawa chided. "As for your having failed, you did the best you could." He smiled. "No reward would be adequate, but we can at least give you something round, beribboned, of gold, which any Japanese would give his life for. I do not speak of money, but you will at least have enough to pay you for a coat and trousers!" He folded the map, and thrust it into an inside pocket. "You are tired. All I can say is thank you."

One of the Japanese unlocked and opened the door. Outside of it stood another Japanese, obviously on guard. Choshimu tugged at Westgaard's sleeves. The boy tried to whisper, but his voice carried—

"His eyes, *danna-san!* His eyes!"

For unmeasurable time the eyes of the Japanese at the door wavered into Westgaard's; eyes definitely crossed. What Westgaard saw in them sent the white man leaping across the office, to pin the other to the floor. Mamatsu was but a jump behind him.

Westgaard was insisting, oblivious to his surroundings, his hands on the other's throat:

"Tell me why you tried to kill me at the station! Tell me!"

Mamatsu, however, was tearing the captive's clothes apart, and let out a triumphant howl.

"No wonder it was known about Westgaard! I told you, Ogawa, that we had a leak in our own office! *Mah!* This is no patriot, Westgaard! What does he care for art, or art treasures! Here is his art!" He spat the Japanese equivalent for "Judas"!

The purse, next to the man's skin, was thick, bulging with new hundred-yen notes.

"Harada knew Mr. Westgaard was going," Setayama stated softly. "He did not know Mamatsu was to go. He will find that his knowledge and lack of it will both prove expensive. Take him away, Mamatsu!"

Mamatsu bowed and jerked the fearful Harada to his feet.

"It will be a pleasure," he said. He bowed to Westgaard. "I failed and you succeeded, but—" poking a finger into the unprotesting, guilty man—"I am to have a little fun of my own, it seems. There is a thing or two about other miscarried plans I will ask this dog. I will see you before you depart, Westgaard-san? Good. We can talk of—no, not volcanoes, I never want to hear of them again—well, of how I am to lose my fat!"

When he shoved Harada away, and the door had been closed again, Ogawa said to his companions—

"That is how the news leaked out."

It was Westgaard who nodded.

"I'm glad you didn't realize what was up," he said to Sanderson.

There was silence, and Ogawa rose to leave.

"You have done a great thing for us," he said to Westgaard.

In Westgaard was pride of accomplishment, pride of race.

"Glad to have done it," he said simply.

WHEN the A-I clan were alone, save for Choshimu, who was proud of his final share, Sanderson announced:

"This is a feather in the A-I's cap. Yes, sir, Andy's done a great thing for us." He coughed, choked down words with difficulty, blinked and then was unable to refrain from saying, "Got something to tell you—got idea f'r you—want—need—man like—like—oh, bosh, let's got' th' Club an' get a drink."

Westgaard discovered that Sanderson's obvious intention to advance him high in the A-I organization left him almost unmoved. The promised decoration and reward to come from Ogawa also seemed without meaning. He supposed he would get immense satisfaction from all of them later.

But now—now he was alive.

Despite the office in which he sat, cave, eruption, black passage, Denshaiko, were all near to him. His body had sufficient strength, his will the power, to fight for existence. Fate had entered into the matter, but he had been able to take advantage of it. Good to be alive—better to have made a good fight for life. What had happened might fade into the drab pattern, but now it was very real.

"Where do we go?" Choshimu woke him, "for your new clothes?"

"Not yet, impatient one. Why?"

Angrily:

"Can I be proud of a *danna-san* who looks like a scarecrow? Not even a temple-sweeper has feet in rags. All of these *danna-san*, who are not half as important as you, have clean faces, but yours is bristly like a pig's back. Every one in the street will laugh at you, and when they laugh I will—"

Westgaard looked at the earnest face.

"We have had enough fighting, baby," he said. "Another word about it, and I will truly beat you."

The men of the A-I inner council were waiting. Hand in hand, with high heads, the tall white man and the little Japanese boy followed them out of the room.

# The Camp-Fire

*A free-to-all* Meeting-Place *for Readers, Writers and Adventurers*

A QUERY about the possible use of a gun without a trigger in one of Walter J. Coburn's recent stories brought the following reply:

Personally, I never saw a man use a gun with no trigger. But I've heard old timers who knew the west in the early days, discuss the business of "gun fanning." According to them, a gun man had little use for a trigger on a single action Colt's six-gun of Frontier or Bisley model. He thumbed his gun hammer with the trigger pulled back, thus uniting the two movements of cocking and trigger pulling, thereby saving a precious fraction of a second. Some of those gun-fanners, so I have been told on the authority of old timers, filed the trigger completely off and used only the hammer.

They thumbed the hammer or "fanned" it with the heel of their left hand (if they were right handed). I have seen a gun fanned with the rapidity of an automatic in the last named manner. The trigger pulled back during the operation. The shooting was accurate and from a point near the waistline.—Walt Coburn.

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THE AUTHOR of the leading story in this issue—it is not his first—rises to introduce himself to Camp-Fire.

I am an ex-major of the cavalry, of the Regular army of some twelve years' service. I don't take the title very seriously except as a defensive measure against the flock of military titles now to be found in every business office, so that one is continually under the necessity of paying his rent to a captain, his insurance premium to a major and his gas bill to a colonel. One can only hope that these prefixes will not become hereditary, or transferable by marriage as in Kentucky, where a man who marries a colonel's widow assumes as well the title of the late lamented!

My not being in the army today I ascribe to the possession of a battered old typewriter and enough previous newspaper training to make me facile in its use. On this wrecked and sorry object I hammered out polemics, diatribes, monographs and all manner of advice and criticism for the improvement of the American regular army. Incidentally I hammered out a book on cavalry organization and training and tactical use which I have to date been asked to permit four foreign general staffs to translate and use. The American cavalry does not know it but they are today conforming to my suggestions as to the organization and use of cavalry machine guns, which makes a fair score for the battered old typewriter aforesaid.

But alas this wrecked old object led me into hot water. I was compelled by it to announce to a startled War Department that the regular army seemed to lack that firm hold on the affections of the American civilian that would result in an efficient national defense. I brazenly suggested that the army was governed in accordance with a lot of outworn aristocratic principles which we had inherited two centuries ago from the British and the Prussians. Pointing out that a system intended for the military governing of peasants by aristocrats was somewhat antiquated for our big middle class nation, I suggested that an ill-fitting collar resulted in an unwilling horse, and that, O heresy of heresies, it was easier to change the collar than the horse. In my magnanimity I went even further, and offered to outline a system that would correct these evils, pointing modestly to the official records which showed that I had commanded a succession of competition winning, record breaking organizations and offering to let the entire army in on the means by which such results had been secured.

Imagine the effect of a tiger in a young ladies' seminary and you can gather something of the effect made by the impact of a new idea on the War Department. Rudyard Kipling wrote me, "I admire your pluck but I have never seen an army reformed from within." Came the dawn and I found myself hurled into the delights and struggles of civil life. But, I might add, the last chapter of the story has yet to be written.

AS TO my chequered career, here goes—Born Greenville, Tenn., Jan. 7, 1890, one of my first memories being of the stalwart mountaineers of my grandfather's 8th Tennessee Cavalry marching several hundred strong behind his hearse. Moved to a western ranch, grew up with horses and cattle and cowpunchers, educated principally by tutors, became foreman of my father's ranch, had some exciting times in the cattle and sheep wars, became newspaper reporter, Portland, Oregon, *Evening Telegram*, went to St. John's Military School, Manlius, N. Y., became sergeant in cadet troop of cavalry, edited school monthly and annual periodicals, graduated as Distinguished Honor Graduate, into second lieutenancy U. S. Cavalry, commanded Troop K Second Cavalry Fort Bliss and Sierra Blanca, Texas, border troubles with bandits, went with regiment to Ethan Allen, Vermont, picked as instructor first Plattsburg Camp (Business Men's camp) under General Wood, got commended by him for handling of troop on maneuvers, read and translated everything on war I could lay hands on, studied Le Bon and Psychology of Leadership, invited on lecture tour, spoke at Union Club, Meadowbrook, Bryn Mawr on preparedness, played polo, rode to hounds and survived the champagne. Foreign service transferred me 9th Cavalry Philippines, commanding newly organized Machine Gun Troop broke world's record machine gun fire, played polo, pistol expert, expert rifleman every season, won Officers' annual race Manila, selected as one of three majors in Philippine Department to go with 27th Infantry to Siberia, commanded 3rd Battalion, spoke French and Russian, made liaison and intelligence officer to Japanese General Staff and Russian White Forces, marched battalion to Nikolsk, to Ussuri, to Khabarovsk, Siberia on the Amur. Made a member of the Ussuri Cossacks and withstood vicious vodka barrage in the doing of it, requested transfer to France and started enroute when armistice broke, ordered to Fort Bliss, Texas, commanded 7th cavalry, organized polo team which won border championship, captained polo team, made manager El Paso Polo association, Secretary Border Polo Association, recommended as Chief of Russian Division, General Staff Intelligence Section, recommended as Military Attache, requested transfer to France study battlefields, transferred to Claims section in France, made chief of Paris section, completed work and ordered to Germany, sent on special duty to Scotland, attached to American Embassy, London, recommended for Military Attache London, transferred to Germany, commanding Provisional Squadron Cavalry, American Forces in Germany, worked out problems machine guns with cavalry, copied by French, Belgian, Spanish, Dutch and Swiss General Staffs, wrote Modern Cavalry, published by McMillan, 1922, returned to States, left army after considerable fireworks, hit civil life equipped with seventeen polo and racing cups, a sabre and a typewriter which last has been furnishing provender for the family. Next to the family my most valued possession is an autographed book from President Roosevelt and two requests from him, one to have me detailed as major in cavalry regiment he proposed for Mexican service, one for my detail as colonel in division he proposed to take to France. I have tried to make this short and to overcome the very human failing which impels a man to talk largely and voluminously about that most interesting subject, himself. Under places I've been I forgot to mention Japan, China, Mexico, Canada, Belgium, Luxembourg, Norway, Denmark, Sweden.—MALCOLM WHEELER-NICHOLSON.

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THE DISCUSSION about the use of blow guns by North American Indians brings comments from two people who ought to know—an Indian and an Indian expert. We'll hear from the former first.

DEAR FRIENDS AT CAMP-FIRE: In your issue of August 15th, there is a letter from Comrade Lucien Beckner, about the use of blow guns in North America. I will tell you what I know of their use among the Iroquois Nation. I am part Oneida (Clan of the Wolf) have lived most of my life among white men, and in my early childhood remember my father using a small cane gun (much like a bean blower) in the woods, a small dart shaped from hickory or other hard tough wood with points made from stone, bone, and sometimes of iron were used. They were used for quick close shots in wooded sections, where it was very essential to make no noise and the range was short, but I can remember a shot of about one hundred feet that my father made and pierced through a rabbit's head with almost instant death to it.

My grandfather told me of the use in his boyhood of such guns for hunting which was then very popular with youths before they were capable of joining war-parties.

I came back to the reservation about five years ago, to find there was no more Oneida Reservation forty miles east of here, so I have made my home here at Onondago Reservation, but even here the continued encroachment upon the Indians continue, and if the Iroquois Nation lives, it will be only by the aid of our few remaining white friends.

I am slightly familiar with a few of the old Indian games and of weapons, and if I can assist in giving you facts of them I will be glad to do so.—CHIEF LOGAN.

And now some words from Arthur Woodward, of A. A., who started it all.

It would appear that friend Lucien Beckner whose Camp-Fire letter is in the August 15 issue is inclined to take issue with me re. the poisoned blowgun dart in North America. There is a chance of course that in the pre-Columbian era there were poisoned darts used in the blow guns of our Southern tribes but so far my research has failed to bring to light any historic record supplanting such a theory. However, anything is possible and it is said that in the old days there were some of the southern tribes who placed poisoned thorns in the trails when pursued by enemies from the north. But as to poison on the darts, *quien sabe*. Beckner's guess is as good as any. However, a word or two regarding those tiny, chipped points which he is convinced were never meant for a large game killing arrow. I wonder if he ever saw a cane arrow with a hard wood foreshaft? If he did, and it was from the right location, then he would be speedily convinced that not only were those exquisitely chipped heads used on regular, man-sized arrows but that they were used on all sorts of game from rabbits to man.

It so happens that there are two types of arrows used by our aborigines of both North and South America. One of these is the single piece arrow usually made of some light tough wood and either pointed with stone (latterly metal or glass), bone, ivory, thorns, shell, copper, deer antler, cane or no point at all. Some of these shafts are about a foot long, maybe a few inches over and others range about four feet in length. The second type is that having a cane shaft with a hard wood foreshaft whipped into the cane with either a sinew or native fibre wrapping. The foreshaft is often pointed, in the case of the Southwestern peoples, Apache to Dieguene of California, with delicate little fingernail-size heads of flint, obsidian, crystal quartz, chalcedony, chert or any other of those easily chipped but keen cutting stones.

Often these points have the two base tangs larger than the body and point of the arrow so that when the head is mounted in the slit of the foreshaft, the base tangs project a bit on either side of the wood and the point is almost buried in the lashing of sinew and bitumen, or glue whichever the case may be. However, such a shaft is capable of deep penetration because the foreshaft much less in circumference than the main shaft, and of very hard wood, plus the fact that it is tipped with a razor like bit of stone. In effect the entire foreshaft which may range from an inch and a half to seven or eight inches and in the case of the big boys from the tribes of South America's jungles to over a foot in length, is an arrow head.

Some of the South American peoples do not tip these foreshafts at all but make them about the size of a lead pencil with a groove cut near the sharpened end, and the groove sometimes filled with poison, when the shaft strikes home, the length of the cane drags it downward and the pencil point of wood snaps off, leaving the poisoned end in the wound. In addition to the hard wood points, those of thin cane, broad of blade are fastened to the foreshaft with sometimes a pinch of the poison secreted in the base of the curve of the head where it is lashed on with native cord. Then too some of the heads from South America are sharpened bone lashed to the foreshaft at an angle in such a fashion as to form a barb, good fish arrows. And another word in regard to the so-called tiny "bird-points" which are supposed to have been used solely for the killing of birds. Most Indians preferred to kill the birds without breaking the flesh or spotting the plumage with blood. Accordingly bird arrows are often and were often made with knobby, blunt heads or if pointed at all had two small, cross sticks bound near the point so there would be just sufficient penetration to bring the bird down yet prevent the shaft following through into the body. At times these heads would be made of the leg bones of small animals or large birds.

SPEAKING again of the blow gun and its use by forest tribes only, mainly that is true, but one must also remember that those same tribes also have the bow and the arrow, and in fact rely more on that weapon than the blow gun. A slight twig or a breath of wind will deflect a light sliver of a dart and even by these tribes habitually using the blow gun, it can only be used effectively where the foliage is open . . . and they were never long distance weapons. For that matter neither were the bows and arrows of the Indians, for contrary to the popular beliefs, the Indians were not the long distance marksmen that fiction writers would have us think. An Indian would sooner waste an hour or so stalking to get a close up shot at an animal or bird than risk an open shot at one hundred yards. Close in however his arrows rarely failed to drive home . . . they had to or Mr. Man went hungry and he thought as much of his belly as we do of ours. In South America where the arrows are prodigious things long cane shafts, long foreshafts and long cane blades for heads, with long feathering, the range must necessarily be short, they are in effect spears launched from huge bows, the bows themselves are in the main, of hardwoods and some six to seven and a half feet in length.

Again referring to the possible use of the arrow heads on blow gun darts, I for one cannot see how they could be used. A maximum of lightness is desired where a blow gun dart is concerned. It must be remembered that it is only a puff of air that speeds a dart on its way, and the "feathering" used is either thistledown (Southern states), or native, raw cotton (South America). A stone head however small would be too heavy for effective shooting. I have never seen a blow gun dart with any sort of a head on it and I am not exaggerating when I say I have seen hundreds of them, not only in their cane quivers but those from a native store, wrapped in palm leaves, ready to be dipped in the poison gourd and tufted with cotton. In South America, the darts are carried untufted as a rule until they are needed, then a pinch of cotton is taken from the little gourd or basketry receptacle that is attached to the short length of cane serving as a quiver and with a skillful twist, wrapped about the butt of the dart. The point is smeared with the fresh curare poison, inserted in the barrel of the gun and phut! it's gone.

AS I explained before the Cherokee used to gather the thistledown, arrange it in wheel shaped bunches and later affix the tufts to the shafts of the slender pine darts which are very light. These darts resemble in appearance, crude swabs. The guns, those made of the cypress and pitched over the outside to prevent air leakage, resemble somewhat those used in South America but have not the elaborate mouth pieces nor sights that grace the long tubes from the southern continent.

Well, maybe this has cleared things up for Friend Beckner, maybe not but "them are the facts." Oh, yes, regarding the Siouan people who moved out to the Plains country. Their knowledge of the bow went with them although there is a band of Teton Dakota known as the Sans Arcs or "No Bows" which tradition saith were at one time lacking that important weapon, which may or may not be the reason for the name. It might just as well be that some poor duffer who had a large family lost his bow on a hunt and was dubbed a Sans Arc or rather a No Bow, can't recall what the Dakota term for the No Bow is at the present moment. Such things are hard to trace and one can only take the derivations as they are given, and take a pinch of salt with them. It is also quite likely that the shortened form of the bow used by the Dakota, came about gradually through the 18th century to date because they did not get horses until along in the early half of that century, or it may have been even later, accounts vary.

There, I reckon that winds it up. If any one else has a bone or two to be gnawed, let him toss them into the circle and we'll growl over them a bit.—ARTHUR WOODWARD.

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THIS seems to be a pretty good test of the number of words in the Eskimo vocabulary.

What started this is the letter from Mr. T. T. Waterman to Mr. Solomons re. the vocabulary of the Eskimo.

Now Mr. Solomons should know and from what I know of him he does know and from my own observations of that bundle of fat good nature he has a very limited vocabulary. The Eskimo, not Mr. Solomons.

To illustrate a point. At one time I ran a small stern wheeler on the Porcupine River from Fort Yukon to the headwaters of the Old Crow River. Of course the natives in this part of the country are not Eskimos but a few of these people drift over the mountains from Herchall Island. One day I had the pleasure of having as a passenger Bishop Stringer of the Anglican Church. Now the good Bishop had spent the greater part of his life administering to the spiritual needs of the natives of the Arctic Coast as far as Bailey Island and is as good an authority on the Eskimo as any.

He was engaged in translating the Bible into Eskimo and was making very heavy weather of the job on account of the limited vocabulary.

Another thing that I know from my own observations is that one word may be used in many places, and that he has spliced out his language with many words of an allied tongue.

Bishop Stringer is one of the very few Missionary teachers that is well liked in the North, and is man enough to hold up his end of the trail with the best of them. While on the trip he shocked the combined Mate, Cook and Deckhand we carried. Nick cooked lunch and came up to relieve me at the wheel so I could eat. After finishing I went back in the wheel house and had hardly settled down to a long stretch of work when Nick came back, his eyes popping out of his head. "What do you think? That minister is washing the dishes." That's the kind of a bird Stringer is.—FRANCIS ROTCH.

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FRANK C. ROBERTSON, whose story "The Long Striker", started the discussion of the relative skill of Australian and American sheep-shearers, passes on to us a pertinent clipping from an Australian paper which was sent to him by an Australian comrade, Walter Wallace. The paper in which the article appeared was the Sydney (New South Wales) *Sun*.

HOW many men can say that they have shorn a million sheep or anything approaching it? Yet Harry Oates, who gave evidence at the Federal Arbitration Court in Sydney last week, has put up a tally of well over half a million in his 25 years of shearing.

Harry Oates, a tall, powerfully-built man of 47, began shearing at the age of 22. He has shorn in New Zealand, as well as over a great part of Australia. His best tally for one day was 270 sheep, shorn in eight hours and 40 minutes and under ordinary shearing conditions.

This is not a record, of course, but it is good going. Harry Oates knew a shearer who once shore 316 sheep in a day. And did not Jack Howe put up a world's record with 320 using the blades?

Oates has approached 270 at other times, but he says that his form began to decline a little after he passed his 35th birthday. His best tally was made at 30 when he had been eight years a shearer. Yet last year he went up to 184, and his average was better than any shearer whom he met in any shed.

He was described in the court as one of the very best shearers in Australia, taking both quality and quantity into account.

To shear 270 sheep in a day of eight hours and 40 minutes means that each sheep is shorn, in an average, in under two minutes.

It would also mean, at the present shearing rate, that the shearer would earn over 2½d a minute, or £5 8s a day. Indeed, from the money point of view Harry Oates was born a little too soon. When he began shearing 25 years ago the rate in N.S.W. was £1 a hundred. Now it is twice that.

In these days Oates works at sheds in N.S.W. and Victoria; he does not wander so far afield as he once did. The season consists of 20 weeks of shearing and 16 of crutching.

Shearing is going on almost all the year round in

Australia, somewhere or other, but few men follow the sheds right through. Shearing often begins in May in the sheds of Western Queensland. It follows the seasons down through the continent.

At the end of the year shearing is still going on in the colder districts of Victoria and of Tasmania. Indeed, some belated sheepmen are still shearing in January, or even February. These, however, are usually small flocks of little interest to the professional shearer.

Oates is a tall man, and some shearers hold that this is no advantage. For the shearer has to stoop over his work almost from start to finish, and, of course, the taller he is the more he has to stoop. In any case, Oates holds that shearing is not a job for an old man. The shearer works at high pressure throughout the day. He needs not only strength, but suppleness.

And while the modern machine shearer may not have to exercise quite as much strength as the blade shearer, and has perhaps not quite as much strain on the wrist, he has to stand the vibration of the machine.

There are, of course, still millions of sheep in Australia shorn with the blades. Most owners of comparatively small flocks do not consider it worth while to put in the machines. Then stud sheep are usually shorn by hand. And there are one or two big stations where the owners still stick to the blades.

With the "concertina" type of merinoes once popular with many flock-owners, the sheep with huge folds of skin standing out in wrinkles, the blades have a marked advantage over the machine-shears. It is easier to run down the wrinkles. This type of Merino has, however, now largely gone out of fashion. Most breeders favor the plain-bodied Merino.

Shearing is one of the many things in which Australia has put up world's records. One hears singularly little of shearing performances in the other great sheep countries of the world—the Argentine, the United States, Russia, South Africa, North Africa.

In Algeria, by the way, they shear the sheep in the ornamental fashion called in the old blade days "ribbing and quartering," if one may judge by the photographs. It looks very nice, with the wool left in ridges, which make fancy designs, but it does not make for fast shearing.

It does not appear, however, that the shearers in any of these countries equal the Australian records, though there are good shearers in the Argentine and in western U.S.A.

Some day, perhaps, we will have an international shearing match. It would be safe to back Australia against the world.

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THE FOLLOWING speaks for itself. I am glad to pass Wm. McKnight's poem on to you.

I give this poem to you as tribute to your magazine *Adventure*—Editors, Readers, Business Men—and all who have made it possible; in appreciation of the sheer perfection within it, especially, that thread of fineness running all through it I would call "Sheer Manhood," so inspiriting in a fatuous age, jaded already in its self-convinced superiority—. WM. MCKNIGHT.

### THE WANDERLUST

The wanderlust and the itching foot
Surely they are the same,
Called by some a Spirit bright,
By others a veriest bane:
Give me the one with adventure fraught,
Else Undiscovered Realms are dead,
With mankind dreaming an oafish dream,
And head fain filled with dread:
Give me of the "Unpromised Land"
Where sweetness always abounds
With Courage o'erflowing the measure,
And Fortitude passing the rounds:
I'd rather see a World being born
In blaze and flare of light,
Than dull my senses with all its pleasures
When bonds had riven it tight:
Methinks we've given it spiteful name
That is not used above,
The whisperings of this solace,
Were better said, Wanderlove.

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BEGINNING with the next issue Mr. Anthony Rud will become editor of *Adventure* and, by the old custom which has never been broken except for a few months last spring, keeper of the Camp-Fire. Although up to the present time he has not been connected officially with the magazine, I know that he has been sitting around the blaze with the rest of us for more than a few years. Many of you will remember his stories in our pages. I won't waste words telling you that he is all right, for I know that the next few Camp-Fires and the next few issues of the magazine will say that much more effectively than I can. I'd like to tell you, though, what a pleasure it has been to me to wield the pine knot gavel even for so short a time. And what an honor. I'm sure that the only fault one could find with the job is that at times it becomes almost too exciting, for it's lively work to keep half a dozen discussions going under full sail and yet keep them off the rocks of hard feeling. But, comrade Rud, I know you'll enjoy it. —J. C.

# ASK *Adventure*

For *free information* and *services* you can't get elsewhere

## The Grand Cañon Country

**NOTHING for a laboring man to do here but be overawed by the immensity of things.**

*Request:*—"I am writing for a little information regarding the Grand Cañon, Arizona. The climate, hunting and fishing, trapping? Also has a laboring man a chance? Which is the best route for a boy to go on a motorcycle?"—Barney Lewis, Paris, Tenn.

*Reply*, by Mr. E. E. Harriman:—Grand Cañon is worn in a mesa or plateau that is 7,000 feet elevation above sea level and is itself 6,000 feet deep, 300 miles long and 13 miles wide in the broadest part. It is a national park and you can not hunt or trap there, but can go to the upper or lower reaches of the cañon and do both, though it will not pay you to try it.

In summer it is pretty hot there and in winter it gets much snow.

I do not know what a laboring man would find to do there, since it is merely a natural wonder, which thousands visit each year.

The best route by which to reach Grand Cañon is to follow the road across New Mexico and Arizona, through Gallup-Holbrook, Flagstaff-Williams, then from Williams north to the cañon. A motorcycle will take you there easily. Remember, Arizona is not thickly settled and has only two main industries —stock raising and mining, with cotton growing coming in to help out and certain areas that are irrigated raising alfalfa and garden truck. There is a vast amount of land now idle there, that would be raising fine crops if they had a dam across the Colorado River high enough to make the water available for use.

In the mines and ore mills a large number of men find work at good wages. No green hand can get a job on a cattle ranch in Arizona, since he costs more than he is worth, according to the ranchers.

## Bullet Molding

**MAKING your own may seem like a throw-back to pioneer days, but it does increase your range, besides being a very interesting process.**

*Request:*—"Some time ago, a year or two in fact, I saw an article of yours about making the .25-20 rifle more efficient by using a hand-loaded cartridge, I mean 'home'-loaded.

About that time I came into possession of a dandy little gun of that caliber, Winchester 26-inch barrel, and I like it fine and can do good work with it up to a little more than 100 yards, but that seems to be about the limit of accuracy; which makes it but little better than .22 Special. Gun is or was new.

Am using Winchester and Remington ammunition, which costs at least 4 cents each here. I think this a little high but those two kinds seem to do best.

As I remember your statement, you loaded some yourself and greatly increased the range. What I would like to know is where to obtain the right kind of stock and equipment for this purpose; have saved all my shells since reading your article; have nearly 1000. I shoot mostly coyotes and find .30-30 better because of added range."—D. A. Coyne, Murdo, S. D.

*Reply*, by Mr. Donegan Wiggins:—In reference to the reloading of the .32-20 or .32 W.C.F. cartridge, I find the best results to be secured from a hand-loaded cartridge, using a bullet tempered one part tin to ten of lead, and DuPont No. 80 rifle smokeless powder, loaded with any of the tools available today, these being Yankee, Ideal, Modern-Bond and Belding & Mull.

The case after firing should be resized in the tool made for that purpose, and I prefer the Ideal for this work. Belding & Mull also sell a tool for this purpose. I never clean a shell using smokeless powder, as I find it unnecessary, authorities to the contrary notwithstanding.

In molding bullets, to secure tin cheaply, I merely get the tinfoil from cigar stores, where it can generally be had from six cents per pound upward, and hardware stores charge about fifty cents per pound for it in block. Lead can be had nearly anywhere; a good source is the battery shops, where lead terminals can be had cheaply after being discarded. You should have the proper Ideal or B & M dipper to pour the lead into the molds as otherwise you may not get a full, solid bullet, this causing erratic shooting.

I'd advise sending fifty cents each to the following firms for their handbooks on reloading rifle and revolver cartridges;

The Lyman Gunsight Corp, Ideal Div., Middletown, Ct.

Messrs Belding & Mull, 820 Osceola Road, Phillipsburg, Pa.

I use the Ideal tools, as I've had them a long time; Belding & Mulls tools seem fine also. In any case, get a double-adjustable chamber for reloading, as this will enable you to crimp each cartridge mouth into the lead of the bullet, thus making a better job and preventing the bullet's either slipping forward out of the shell or back into it.

Both books show a number of different bullets adapted to the .32-20, and powder charges suitable for different purposes. I use the .32-20 in the Winchester rifle and Colt Risley model revolver, and find it a good clean-shooting load, and very accurate indeed.

## Mate

A SOUTH AMERICAN stimulant used to balance one's diet, and drunk from a "nest-egg" gourd.

*Request*:—"Recently I have received a letter describing a South American product called "Joyz Yerba Mate" and since I was never anywhere near there and no available information on hand, I'll have to come to you for some information provided it's not too much trouble for you. The questions are:

1. What is the meaning of the name?
2. What benefit does one derive by using same?
3. Is it used extensively in the South American republics?
4. They claim it is a very good substitute for alcoholic beverages; is this true?
5. Why is it?
6. Where does it grow?
7. Is it scarce to find or does it grow abundant?
8. The gourd from which they sip the concoction, what is that made of?
9. What export company handles this stuff? I mean gourd *mate* and *bombilla*.
10. If it is out of the States is it necessary to write to them in the Spanish language?
11. If you can not answer question 9 will you let me have the name of some of the exporters so that I can write to them?"—EDWARD F. CIHAK, Berwyn, Ill.

*Reply*, by Mr. Edgar Young:—1. *Yerba mate*, in Spanish or *Herba matté* in Portuguese, is the name for what the Guarani Indians called *kaa* or *caa* meaning *the* plant. It is the tree tea growing in southern Brazil and in Paraguay, a tree closely allied to the holly of this country, which has quite a few of the same properties, as you will note if you every dry holly leaves and steep them. The trees grow a bit larger than holly trees and the leaves are larger and have no prickers on them. I do not know what the adjective you have ahead of the name means. It is possibly a trade name. *Yerba* or *Herba* is the name it is called by down there, with the *mate* or *matté* usually left off.

2. It is a mild stimulant, a diuretic, a slight laxative, and is used locally to balance the ration of the natives who eat much meat and little vegetables.

3. In Southern Brazil, Uruguay, Paraguay and Chile it is extensively used. Considerable of it is also used in Europe. This country imports very little. The last figure I saw was 350 barrels.

4. No.

5. It is not.

6. See answer No. 1.

7. Abundant in the state of Parana, Brazil, and Paraguay.

8. It is a small "nest-egg" gourd.

9. They are only sold here as curios. A few years ago an outfit started a tea-house on Seventh Ave. here in New York and served the herb. I haven't been up that way for a while and don't know how they made out.

10. In Spanish if in Spanish speaking countries, Brazil speaks Portuguese.

11. Write Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce, Latin American Division, Washington, D. C., and ask them for names of importers here in the U. S. and also declared price per barrel. They have this information and will furnish it on request. Also send 5 cts. (coin) to Pan American Union, Washington, D. C., and ask them for their booklet *Yerba Mate* which will give you a lot of information about the tea.

**Our Experts**—They have been chosen by us not only for their knowledge and experience but with an eye to their integrity and reliability. We have emphatically assured each of them that his advice or information is not to be affected in any way by whether a commodity is or is not advertised in this magazine.

They will in all cases answer to the best of their ability, using their own discretion in all matters pertaining to their sections, subject only to our general rules for "Ask Adventure," but neither they nor the magazine assume any responsibility beyond the moral one of trying to do the best that is possible.

1. **Service**—It is free to anybody, provided self-addressed envelop and *full* postage, *not attached*, are enclosed. Correspondents writing to or from foreign countries will please enclose International Reply Coupons, purchasable at any post-office, and exchangeable for stamps of any country in the International Postal Union. Be sure that the issuing office stamps the coupon in the left-hand circle.

2. **Where to Send**—Send each question direct to the expert in charge of the particular section whose field covers it. He will reply by mail. Do NOT send questions to this magazine.

3. **Extent of Service**—No reply will be made to requests for partners, for financial backing, or for chances to join expeditions. "Ask Adventure" covers business and work opportunities, but only if they are outdoor activities, and only in the way of general data and advice. It is in no sense an employment bureau.

4. **Be Definite**—Explain your case sufficiently to guide the expert you question.

**Salt and Fresh Water Fishing** *Fishing-tackle and equipment; fly and bait casting and bait; camping-outfits; fishing-trips.*—JOHN B. THOMPSON ("Ozark Ripley"), care *Adventure.*

**Small Boating** *Skiff, outboard small launch river and lake tripping and cruising.*—RAYMOND S. SPEARS, Inglewood, California.

**Canoeing** *Paddling, sailing, cruising; equipment and accessories, clubs, organizations, official meetings, regattas.*—EDGAR S. PERKINS, 5742 Stony Island Ave., Chicago, Ill.

**Yachting** BERIAH BROWN, Coupeville, Wash., or HENRY W. RUBINKAM, Chicago Yacht Club, Box 507, Chicago, Ill.

**Motor Boating** GEORGE W. SUTTON, 6 East 45th St., New York City.

**Motor Camping** JOHN D. LONG, 610 W. 16th St., New York City.

**Motor Vehicles** *Operation, operating cost, legislative restrictions, public safety.*—EDMUND B. NEIL, care *Adventure.*

**All Shotguns** *including foreign and American makes; wing shooting.* JOHN B. THOMPSON ("Ozark Ripley"), care *Adventure.*

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**Edged Weapons**—ROBERT E. GARDNER, 423 Wilson Ave., Columbus, O.

**First Aid on the Trail** *Medical and surgical emergency care, wounds, injuries, common illnesses, diet, pure water, clothing, insect and snake bite; industrial first aid and sanitation for mines, logging camps, ranches and exploring parties as well as for camping trips of all kinds. First-aid outfits. Health hazard of the outdoor life, arctic, temperate and tropical zones.*—CLAUDE P. FORDYCE, M. D., Falls City, Neb.

**Health-Building Outdoors** *How to get well and how to keep well in the open air, where to go and how to travel, right exercise, food and habits, with as much adaptation as possible to particular cases.*—CLAUDE P. FORDYCE, M. D., Falls City, Neb.

**Hiking** CLAUDE P. FORDYCE, M.D., Falls City, Neb.

**Camp Cooking** HORACE KEPHART, Bryson City, N. C.

**Mining and Prospecting** *Territory anywhere on the continent of North America. Questions on mines, mining law, mining, mining methods or practise; where and how to prospect; how to outfit; how to make the mine after it is located; how to work it and how to sell it; general geology necessary for miner or prospector, including the precious and base metals and economic minerals such as pitchblende or uranium, gypsum, mica, cryolite, etc. Questions on investment excluded.*—VICTOR SHAW, Loring, Alaska.

**Forestry in the United States** *Big-game hunting, guides and equipment; national forests of the Rocky Mountain States. Questions on the policy of the Government regarding game and wild animal life in the forests.*—ERNEST W. SHAW, South Carver, Mass.

**Tropical Forestry** *Tropical forests and forest products; their economic possibilities; distribution, exploration, etc.*—WILLIAM R. BARBOUR, care *Adventure.*

**Railroading in the U. S., Mexico and Canada** *General office, especially immigration, work; advertising work, duties of station agent, bill clerk, ticket agent, passenger brakeman and rate clerk. General Information.*—R. T. NEWMAN, P. O. Drawer 368, Anaconda, Mont.

**Army Matters, United States and Foreign** LIEUT. GLEN R. TOWNSEND, Fort Snelling, Minn.

**Navy Matters** *Regulations, history, customs, drill, gunnery; tactical and strategic questions, ships, propulsion, construction, classification; general information. Questions regarding the enlisted personnel and officers except such as contained in the Register of Officers can not be answered. Maritime law.*—LIEUT. FRANCIS GREENE, U. S. N. R., 2200 Kinzie Ave., Racine, Wis.

**U. S. Marine Corps** LIEUT. F. W. HOPKINS, Fleet Marine Corps Reserves, Box 1042, Madford, Oregon.

**State Police** FRANCIS H. BENT, JR., care *Adventure.*

**Royal Canadian Mounted Police** PATRICK LEE, No. 2 Grace Court, Brooklyn, N. Y.

**Horses** *Care, breeding, training of horses in general; hunting, jumping, and polo; horses of the old and new West.*—THOMAS H. DAMERON, 911 S. Union Ave., Pueblo, Colo.

**Dogs** JOHN B. THOMPSON ("Ozark Ripley)," care *Adventure.*

**American Anthropology North of the Panama Canal** *Customs, dress, architecture, pottery and decorative arts, weapons and implements, fetishism, social divisions.*—ARTHUR WOODWARD, Museum of American Indians, 155th St. and Broadway, N. Y. City.

**Taxidermy** SETH BULLOCK, care *Adventure.*

**Herpetology** *General information concerning reptiles (snakes, lizards, turtles, crocodiles) and amphibians (frogs toads, salamanders); their customs, habits and distribution.*—DR. G. K. NOBLE, American Museum of Natural History, 77th St. and Central Park West, New York, N. Y.

**Entomology** *General information about insects and spiders; venomous insects, disease-carrying insects, insects attacking man, etc.; distribution.*—DR. FRANK E. LUTZ, Ramsey, N. J.

**Ichthyology** GEORGE S. MYERS, Stanford University, Box 821, Calif.

**Stamps** H. A. DAVIS, The American Philatelic Society, 3421 Colfax Ave., Denver, Colo.

**Coins and Medals** HOWLAND WOOD, American Numismatic Society, Broadway at 156th St., New York City.

**Radio** *Telegraphy, telephony, history, broadcasting, apparatus, invention, receiver construction, portable sets.*—DONALD MCNICOL, 132 Union Road, Roselle Park, N. J.

**Ornithology** PROF. ARCHIBALD RUTLEDGE, Mercersburg Academy, Mercersburg, Pa.

**Photography** *Information on outfitting and on work in out-of-the-way places. General information.*—PAUL L. ANDERSON, 36 Washington St., East Orange, New Jersey or SIGISMUND BLUMANN, Claus Spreckels Bldg., San Francisco, Calif.

**Linguistics and Ethnology** (*a*) *Racial and tribal tradition, history and psychology; folklore and mythology.* (*b*) *Languages and the problems of race migration, national development and descent (authorities and bibliographies).* (*c*) *Individual languages and language-families; interrelation of tongues, their affinities and plans for their study.*—DR. NEVILLE WHYMANT, 345 W. 23rd St., New York City.

**The Sea Part 1** *American Waters.* Also ships, seamen, shipping; nautical history, seamanship, navigation, small-boat sailing; commercial fisheries of North America; marine bibliography of U. S.; fishing vessels of the North Atlantic and Pacific banks. (See next two sections.)—BERIAH BROWN, Coupeville, Wash.

**The Sea Part 2** *Statistics and records of American shipping.*—HARRY E. RIESEBERG, Apartment 330-A, Kew Gardens, Washington, D. C.

**The Sea Part 3** *British Waters.* Also old-time sailoring.—CAPTAIN A. E. DINGLE, care *Adventure.*

**The Sea Part 4** *Atlantic and Indian Oceans; Cape Horn and Magellan Straits; Islands and Coasts.* (See also West Indian Sections.)—CAPT. DINGLE, care *Adventure.*

**The Sea Part 5** *The Mediterranean; Islands and Coasts.*—CAPT. DINGLE, care *Adventure.*

**The Sea Part 6** *Arctic Ocean (Siberian Waters).*—CAPT. C. L. OLIVER, care *Adventure.*

**Hawaii** DR. NEVILLE WHYMANT, 345 West 23rd St., New York City.

**South Sea Islands** JAMES STANLEY MEAGHER, 5316 Pine Street, Inglewood, Calif.

**Philippine Islands** Buck Connor, L. B. 4, Quartzsite, Ariz.

**Borneo** Capt. Beverley Giddings, care *Adventure.*

★**New Guinea** *Questions regarding the policy of the Government or proceedings of Government officers not answered.*—L. P. B. Armit, Port Moresby, Territory of Papua, *via* Sydney, Australia.

✠**New Zealand, Cook Islands, Samoa.** Tom L. Mills, *The Feilding Star*, Feilding, New Zealand.

★**Australia and Tasmania** Phillip Norman, 842 Military Rd., Mosman, Sydney, N. S. W., Australia.

**Asia Part 1** *Siam, Andamans, Malay Straits, Straits Settlements, Shan States and Yunnan.*—Gordon MacCreagh, 21 East 14th St., New York.

**Asia Part 2** *Annam, Laos, Cambodia, Tongking, Cochin China.*—Dr. Neville Whymant, 345 West 23rd St., New York City.

**Asia Part 3** *Southern and Eastern China.*—Dr. Neville Whymant, 345 West 23rd St., New York City.

**Asia Part 4** *Western China, Burma, Tibet.* Capt. Beverley Giddings, care *Adventure.*

★**Asia Part 5** *Northern China and Mongolia.*—George W. Twomey, M. D., 60 Rue de l'Amirauté, Tientsin, China, and Dr. Neville Whymant, 345 West 23rd St., New York City.

**Asia Part 6** *Japan.*—Sidney Herschel Small, San Rafael, Calif., and O. E. Riley, 4 Huntington Ave., Scarsdale, New York.

**Asia Part 7** *Persia, Arabia.*—Captain Beverley Giddings, care *Adventure.*

**Asia Minor.**—Dr. Neville Whymant, 345 West 23rd St., New York City.

**Africa Part 1** *Egypt.*—Dr. Neville Whymant, 345 West 23rd St., New York City.

✠**Africa Part 2** *Sudan.*—W. T. Moffat, Opera House, Southport, Lancashire, England.

**Africa Part 3** *Tripoli. Including the Sahara, Tuaregs, Caravan trade and caravan routes.*—Captain Beverley Giddings, care *Adventure.*

**Africa Part 4** *Tunis and Algeria.*—Dr. Neville Whymant, 345 West 23rd St., New York City.

**Africa Part 5** *Morocco.*—George E. Holt, care *Adventure.*

**Africa Part 6** *Sierra Leone to Old Calabar, West Africa, Southern and Northern Nigeria.*—W. C. Collins, care *Adventure.*

**Africa Part 7** *Cape Colony, Orange River Colony, Natal and Zululand.*—Captain F. J. Franklin, Gulfport and Coast Enquiry Depot, Turnbull Bldg., Gulfport, Miss.

✠**Africa Part 8** *Portuguese East.*—R. G. Waring, Corunna, Ontario, Canada.

**South America Part 1** *Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia and Chile.*—Edgar Young, care *Adventure.*

**South America Part 2** *Venezuela, the Guianas and Brazil.*—Paul Vanorden Shaw, 21 Claremont Ave., New York, N. Y.

**West Indies** *Haiti, Santo Domingo, Porto Rico, Virgin and Jamaica Groups.*—Charles Bell Emerson, Adventure Cabin, Los Gatos, Calif.

**Central America** *Canal Zone, Panama, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Honduras, British Honduras, Salvador, Guatemala.*—Charles Bell Emerson, Adventure Cabin, Los Gatos, Calif.

**Mexico Part 1** *Northern. Border States of old Mexico Sonora, Chihuahua, Coahuila, Nuevo Leon and Tamaulipas.*—J. W. Whiteaker, 2903 San Gabriel St., Austin, Tex.

**Mexico Part 2** *Southern, Lower California; Mexico south of a line from Tampico to Mazatlan.*—C. R. Mahaffey, 236 Fox Ave., San José, Calif.

**Mexico Part 3** *Southeastern. Federal Territory of Quintana Roo and states of Yucatan and Campeche.* Also archeology.—W. Russell Sheets, 301 Popular Ave., Takoma Park, Md.

**Newfoundland.**—C. T. James, Bonaventure Ave., St. Johns, Newfoundland.

**Greenland** Also dog-team work, whaling, geology, ethnology (Eskimo).—Victor Shaw, Loring, Alaska.

**Canada Part 1** *New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island.* Also homesteading.—Fred L. Bowden, 5 Howard Avenue, Binghamton, New York.

✠**Canada Part 2** *Southeastern Quebec.* Jas. F. Belford, Codrington, Ont., Canada.

✠**Canada Part 3** *Height of Land, Region of Northern Quebec and Northern Ontario (except strip between Minn. and C. P. Ry.); Southeastern Ungava and Keewatin.* Also Indian life and habits: Hudson's Bay Co. posts. No questions answered on trapping for profit.—S. E. Sangster ("Canuck"), Box 393, Ottawa, Canada.

✠**Canada Part 4** *Ottawa Valley and Southeastern Ontario.*—Harry M. Moore, Deseronto, Ont., Canada.

✠**Canada Part 5** *Georgian Bay and Southern Ontario.* Also national parks.—A. D. Robinson, 115 Huron St., Walkerville, Ont., Canada.

**Canada Part 6** *Hunters Island and English River District.*—T. F. Phillips, Department of Science, Duluth Central High School, Duluth, Minn.

**Canada Part 7** *Yukon, British Columbia and Alberta.* Also yachting.—C. Plowden, Plowden Bay, Howe Sound, B. C.

**Canada Part 8** *The Northw. Ter. and the Arctic, especially Ellesmere Land, Baffinland, Melville and North Devon Islands, North Greenland and the half-explored islands west of Ellesmere.*—Patrick Lee, Tudor Hall, Elmhurst, Long Island.

**Alaska.** Also mountain work.—Theodore S. Solomons, 1427 Lareta Terrace, Los Angeles, Calif.

**Western U. S. Part 1** *Calif., Ore., Wash., Nev., Utah and Ariz.*—E. E. Harriman, 2303 W. 23rd St., Los Angeles, Calif.

**Western U. S. Part 2** *New Mexico.* Also Indians, Indian dances, including the snake dance.—F. H. Robinson, 200-202 Korber Block, Albuquerque, N. M.

**Western U. S. Part 3** *Colo. and Wyo.*—Frank Earnest, Sugar Loaf, Colo.

**Western U. S. Part 4** *Mont. and the Northern Rocky Mountains.*—Fred W. Egelston, 1029 Litch Court, Reno, Nev.

**Western U. S. Part 5** *Idaho and Surrounding Country.*—R. T. Newman, P. O. Drawer 368, Anaconda, Mont.

**Western U. S. Part 6** *Tex. and Okla.*—J. W. Whiteaker, 2903 San Gabriel St., Austin, Tex.

**Middle Western U. S. Part 1** *The Dakotas, Neb., Ia., Kan.* Especially early history of Missouri Valley.—Joseph Mills Hanson, care *Adventure.*

**Middle Western U. S. Part 2** *Mo. and Ark. Also the Missouri Valley up to Sioux City, Iowa. Especially wilder countries of the Ozarks, and swamps.*—John B. Thompson ("Ozark Ripley"), care *Adventure.*

**Middle Western U. S. Part 3** *Ind., Ill., Mich., Minn., and Lake Michigan.* Also clamming, natural history, legends.—John B. Thompson ("Ozark Ripley"), care *Adventure.*

**Middle Western U. S. Part 4** *Mississippi River.* Also routes, connections, itineraries; river-steamer and power-boat travel; history and idiosyncrasies of the river and its tributaries. Questions about working one's way should be addressed to Mr. Spears.—Geo. A. Zerr, Vine and Hill Sts., Crafton P. O., Ingram, Pa.

**Middle Western U. S. Part 5** *Lower Mississippi River. (St. Louis down), Atchafalaya across La. swamps, St. Francis River, Arkansas Bottoms.*—Raymond S. Spears, Inglewood, Calif.

**Middle Western U. S. Part 6** *Great Lakes.* Also seamanship, navigation, courses, distances, reefs and shoals, lights and landmarks, charts; laws, fines, penalties, river navigation.—H. C. Gardner, 3302 Daisy Ave., Cleveland, Ohio.

**Eastern U. S. Part 1** *Eastern Maine. For all territory east of the Penobscot River.*—H. B. Stanwood, East Sullivan, Me.

**Eastern U. S. Part 2** *Western Maine. For all territory west of the Penobscot River.*—Dr. G. E. Hathorne, 70 Main Street, Bangor, Me.

**Eastern U. S. Part 3** *Vt., N. H., Conn., R. I. and Mass.*—Howard R. Voight, P. O. Box 1332, New Haven, Conn.

**Eastern U. S. Part 4** *Adirondacks, New York.*—Raymond S. Spears, Inglewood, Calif.

**Eastern U. S. Part 5** *Maryland and District of Columbia.* Also historical places.—Lawrence Edmund Allen, 1505 C St. S. E., Washington, D. C.

**Eastern U. S. Part 6** *Tenn., Ala., Miss., N. and S. C., Fla. and Ga. Except Tennessee River and Atlantic seaboard.* Also sawmilling, saws.—Hapsburg Liebe, care *Adventure.*

**Eastern U. S. Part 7** *Appalachian Mountains south of Virginia.*—Paul M. Fink, Jonesboro, Tenn.

★ *(Enclose addressed envelop with International Reply Coupon for five cents.)*
✠ *(Enclose addressed envelop with International Reply Coupon for three cents.)*

# BOOKS *you can* Believe

HEROES OF AVIATION, by Colonel Laurence La Tourette Driggs. Published by Little, Brown and Company, of Boston, Massachusetts, 1927. This is a book that every reader of history should have in his library, for it contains the records of practically all the leading pilots of both the Allied and German Air Forces. Intimate close ups of the various Aces are given by word and photographs. Perhaps the most interesting of all the chapters is the account of Lieutenant Frank Luke. An interesting detail of this record of air fighting shows up the fact that although the fast single seater fighting squadrons and pilots received most of the glory it was the Observation pilots and observers who suffered the greatest casualties with the bombing pilots and bombardiers a very close second. However, if we hadn't had the pursuit squadrons to clear the sky for us very few of us would have been alive to tell the story.—W. G. SCHAUFFLER.

THE FURTHER VENTURE BOOK, by Elinor Mordaunt. The Century Co. This three hundred page book is a classic of coral seas. The distinguished authoress and adventurer has caught the spirit of the tropical empire that is the Dutch East Indies, and the result is an absorbing and gripping narrative. In this little known part of the world, where human life is of little or no value, where morality is on a high plane, at least among the natives, this courageous Englishwoman ventured alone, successfully overcoming seemingly impossible difficulties, the result being The Further Venture book, a worthwhile, truthful, and masterful description of this topsy-turvy part of the globe, which, to use the writers' own words is "smiling, gay, cruel and variable." To all those who love adventure in the "raw" yet told in the most entertaining way, I heartily recommend this book. It belongs in the comparatively small library of books worth reading. —By JAMES STANLEY MEAGHER.

# Lost Trails

*All inquiries of this sort received by us, unless containing contrary instructions, will be considered as intended for publication in full with the inquirer's name. We reserve the right, in case the inquirer refuses his name, to substitute any number or other name, to reject any item that seems to us unsuitable, and in general to use our discretion in all matters pertaining to this department. Except relatives, inquiries from one sex to the other are barred.*

THOMSON, CHARLES H.—Left Vancouver, B. C., about 1899, for Shanghai, China. Friend of Col. Baker and Mrs. Dr. Merchant. Last heard of in Shanghai, 1911. Any information concerning him will be greatly appreciated by old friends. Address—B. V. GRANT, Care of *Adventure.*

MORGAN WALTER V.—Write to your old Pal, H. ROGERS, 132 Tioga Avenue, San Francisco, California.

TAYLOR, FREEMAN B.—Tall, dark hair, blue eyes. Age 26. Disappeared from home, 93 Fulton St., Akron, Ohio, in July, 1925. Recent death in family and needed at home. Any information will be very greatly appreciated by his mother. Address—MRS. W. V. TAYLOR, Bon Secour Route, Foley, Alabama.

CASSIDY, FRANK—Left Westminster, London, about 1881—for Buenos Aires, South America. Two of his St. Joseph's College colleagues would like news of him. Address—FRANK A. REYNOLDS, "The Celtic Composer's," 116 St. John's Hall, London, S. W. 11, England.

CORNELIUS, AUGUST WILLIAM—Of St. Joseph, Missouri. Disappeared on March 4, 1895. Expert carriage painter by trade. Last employed by Frank Osborne, Maysville, Dekale Co., Mo., for about 2 years residing at Mrs. Iden's boarding house. 5 ft. 10 in., average weight, 156 lbs., blue eyes, fair complexion, bald head, if now living is about 75 years old. His daughter is eager to get in communication with him or learn of his fate. Address—MRS. FLORA SMITH, 6621 Hillman Avenue, Birmingham, Alabama.

BURROWS, WILLIAM J.—Left Cripple Creek about 20 years ago for Western Texas. Age 59. 5 ft. 5 in. tall. Any information would be thankfully received by his brother. Address—R. H. BURROWS, Apartado 405, San Jose, Costa Rica.

SCAGG, TIM—Chery Kee Indian. When the Indians were driven from Kentucky and Tenn. he went to Missouri. Received his mail at Webs Cross Roads, later called Web Post Office. His granddaughter is anxious to get in communication with him. Address—MRS. LAURA WRIGHT, No. 622, San Francisco, Calif.

RAMSEY, CHARLES E.—Machinist. Last heard of in Detroit, Michigan. Any information would be gladly received by his mother. Address—MRS. H. RAMSEY, 22 Shore Drive, Winthrop, Mass.

"ATTENTION!" Former members Co. "A" 12th M. G. B'n. Write me. Address—C. D. KELLEY, Harriston, Va.

WARREN, JACK, JR.—Jack dear, please write or come back to mother and me. We miss you and mother has been very sick. We know you have some good reason for your action and both forgive. Write *Adventure* for your mail.—ELAINE.

HACKETT, JOSEPH TERRENCE.—Last heard of in New Orleans about 21 years ago. Was then about 23 years old, height six feet, dark brown eyes and hair. Address—MRS. ANNIE HACKETT-HAMMACK, 2200 Gravier Street, New Orleans, La.

G. R. F.—We are all for you, George. Write your loving aunts in Chicago.

*"Old Songs that Men have Sung," appears in alternate issues.*

# *The* Trail *Ahead*

***The next issue of* ADVENTURE, *out October 15th***

## Two *Complete Novelettes:*

## The Road Through Cheppy

By Leonard H. Nason

If the red-haired ambulance driver had not insisted on their visiting every field-kitchen in their sector to discover what cook was dishing out the best fare, he and his pal *Wally* certainly would not have gone hungry that night; nor would the colonel have sworn to high heaven that a German spy was bombarding him with grenades; and last but not least, the red-nosed Ghost would most assuredly have for once turned in quite sober.

## Things Work Out

By Thomson Burtis

*Slim Evans*, the tallest, thinnest, luckiest flying officer of the Border air patrol, tells what happened at the McMullen flight, when a storm and a smuggler crossed the Border together, just as a new major with a reputation of being especially hard-boiled arrived to take charge of the post.

## Ike The Diver's Friend

By James Stevens

When a crowd of gaunt, worn, hot-eyed miners packed a ton of gold-dust down the gangplank and gave to Seattle and the world the news of the fabulous strike on Bonanza Creek, *Edward Matthews, Esquire*, stevedore and philosopher, was not at all impressed. Said the little Cockney: "Nobody kin stand prosperity. Why, if a feller like me can't, 'oo kin?" To which his friend *Ike the Diver* immediately answered, "Me!" and set out to prove his contention.

## Hellward

By Captain Dingle

There was a scarcely plausible legend that *Hellward* had once worn gold braid and had commanded great ocean liners. Scarcely plausible, if you saw him as he now was—ragged, bleary-eyed, kicked about by the black native policemen. Even the young nurse he pulled from the shark-infested waters saw no hope for him. Till one day the cholera ship came to the island.

## And—*Other Good Stories*

Part IV of OLD FATHER OF WATERS, a novel of old steamboating days on the Mississippi, by ALAN LEMAY; BLOOD, a Kentucky hill-billy's loyalty, by FISWOODE TARLETON; WHAT'S THE USE, a humorous story of the harvest fields, by HARRY G. HUSE; THE PEARLS OF LINGAY, a South Sea Island mystery, by CAPTAIN FREDERICK MOORE; SLOW FIRE, a Marine under charge of cowardice, by JOHN WEBB; SAM SAM, how the Hill and Plain Express came through, by T. T. FLYNN.

Adventure is out on the 1st and 15th of the month

IT'S THE *YOUNGER CROWD* THAT SETS THE STANDARD!

GO to the younger
crowd if you want the
*right* word on what to wear
or drive or smoke. And
notice, please, that the
particular cigarette they
call their own today is one
that you've known very
well for a very long time.

FATIMA

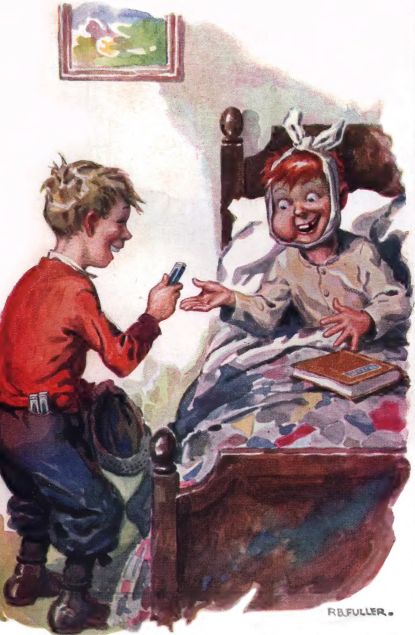
FATIMA
TURKISH BLEND CIGARETTES

*What a whale of a difference just a few cents make!*

# Black Jack

"that good old licorice flavor"

ADAMS
Black Jack
CHEWING GUM



Give this picture a title. $1000 in prizes

# $1000

## FOR TITLES TO THIS BLACK JACK PICTURE

*8 cash prizes will be paid as follows*

| | |
|---|---|
| 1st Prize . . . . . . | $500 |
| 2nd Prize . . . . . | 250 |
| 3rd Prize . . . . . | 100 |
| 4th Prize . . . . . | 50 |
| 5th to 8th Prizes ($25 each) | 100 |

Here's fun for every member of the family. This picture needs a title. Perhaps chewing Black Jack and enjoying its good old licorice flavor, although not a condition of this contest, will help you to find the winning title that fully expresses the story this picture tells. Everybody residing in the United States or Canada is eligible except employees of the manufacturers of Black Jack Chewing Gum.

· RULES ·

**1:** Each entry must contain a title suggestion in 20 words or less and the name and address of the sender. **2:** Contestants may submit as many answers as they wish. When sending in suggested titles, the reverse side of Black Jack wrappers, or white paper cut the size of a Black Jack wrapper (2¾"x3"), may be used. Use one wrapper or one piece of paper for each title suggested. **3:** All entries for this contest must be sent to "Black Jack Titles", Dept. 11, American Chicle Company, Long Island City, New York, and must be in before midnight, Oct. 25, 1927. Winners to be announced as soon thereafter as possible. **4:** Titles must be sent first class mail, postage prepaid. **5:** Originality of thought, cleverness of idea, and clearness of expression and neatness will count. **6:** The judges will be a committee appointed by the makers of Black Jack and their decisions will be final. If there are ties, each tying contestant will be awarded the prize tied for.

Study the picture. Think of Black Jack's delicious licorice flavor. Then send in your title or titles. Contest closes at midnight, Oct. 25, 1927.